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CHRIST AND HIS CRITICS

STUDIES IN THE PERSON AND PROBLEMS OF JESUS

BY THE

REV. F. R. MONTGOMERY HITCHCOCK

M.A., B.D.

FORMERLY SCHOLAR AND UNIVERSITY STUDENT OF TRINITY COLLEGE AND DONNELLAN LECTURER IN DUBLIN UNIVERSITY

AUTHOR OF

"THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS" "SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE STUDY"

"PRESENT CONTROVERSY ON PRAYER"

INTRODUCTION BY THE

VERY REV. J. H. BERNARD, D.D.

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PREFACE

THE gaze of the Hebrew seer was fixed on things behind the vail. His vision was of "a land of far distances," over the horizon of which he saw the silver rays of a dawn that was to usher in a scene of unparalleled light and love. Ever and anon the message of sorrow and punishment lay heavy upon his soul like a burden of grief. But the burden rolled away, and the prophet heard a song in the higher strain of hope and victory, of comfort and the presence of the Lord.

An attempt will here be made to follow the flashes of light that fell across the Master's path and caused men to behold in Him the Strong Son of God, to trace the glory-glimpses in the life of the Virgin-Born that illumine the scene and reveal something of more lasting grandeur and more impressive significance than any human pageant, and to watch the Light itself in its manifold conflict with the darkness that surrounds it. And we shall see that the various problems of the Incarnation must be approached from a sympathetic study of the Personality of Jesus, if they are to be satisfactorily solved; and that the mystery of Christ throws an effectual light upon the many

questions of human life and thought, if the quest be made for love of Him who presents Himself to faith alone. That mystery has been now proclaimed for nineteen centuries in the ears of men, inspiring glorious prospects, creating grave problems. To those prospects we shall give good heed as we attempt to meet these problems; and we shall find that our heavy burdens, like the Hebrew prophet's, will roll past into the darkness beyond, if we are true to the golden hopes that centre in Him who is the Light to the path of the believer, whose Incarnation is both explanation and consummation of the Creation, in whom God the Father is revealed, and to whom the Holy Spirit's ways from the beginning lead.

INTRODUCTION

THE aim of critical inquiry as to the historical value of the books of the New Testament is not only negative, as is sometimes supposed—to eliminate from the beliefs of Christendom dogmas which cannot be securely maintained ; much more is it positive—to present a coherent and vivid picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. "The Quest of the Historical Jesus" is the secret of the labours of the best scholarship of our time.

There are those for whom all such critical investigation is quite superfluous. The saints of every age, and not least of our own, know in Whom they have believed, and they are indifferent to any conclusions which the historian may reach as to this or that incident in the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth. They are conscious of the presence and the power of the Living Christ ; and they rightly claim that they can be more certain of His guidance and grace than any one can be of any historical fact in the distant past. The intuitions of the spirit do not seem to them to demand

any extraneous corroboration. "Jesus lives," and that is enough.

Some, again, are not so much indifferent to criticism as suspicious of it. They do not see why any one should trouble himself about the history of Christian origins; the old familiar words of the Gospels are in harmony with their highest spiritual experience. This cannot be mistaken; it is sure. But they are uneasy lest the attempt to examine afresh the sacred documents which are the product and the record of the faith of the first Christian disciples may disturb the foundations of their own faith. And so the term "critic" begins to be used as a term of reproach. Yet the task of criticism is not superfluous; nor is it merely destructive. It is not superfluous, for until the venture of faith has been confirmed by the findings of reason, the whole man—the rational as well as the spiritual part of him—has not accepted the mastery of Christ. Nor is it merely destructive. Its effort is to construct an intellectual image of Jesus, which may correspond to the historical facts when scrutinised with every instrument of scholarship, and which may also be adequate to explain His present power over the souls of men.

The writer of this book has, like so many others, essayed this great task; and his readers will recognise that he has endeavoured to face *all* the facts, and not

only those selected for his purpose. This is, no doubt, the reason of that combination of attention to the *minutiae* of scholarship with appeals to the spiritual instincts of those for whom he writes, which is a prominent feature of his method. For him, there is no inconsistency between the verdict of history and the verdict of Christian experience. There is no such dilemma as that suggested in the question-begging title " Jesus *or* Christ ? " I cannot doubt, for myself, that this is the true method, which takes account of all the data, which is not afraid of history, but which recognises all the while that Neander was right when he said *Pectus facit theologum.*

No picture of Jesus Christ can be complete or satisfying which does not include the Cross; and Mr. Hitchcock would be the last to suggest that his book covers the whole ground. But it did not come within the scope of his present purpose to enter upon this aspect of the Incarnate Life of the Son of God Who came to redeem the sons of men ; that is too large a matter to relegate to one chapter. The Incarnation is indeed the " Key of Christianity," the centre of the Creeds which summarise our theology ; without it, the great doctrine of the Atonement could not be made intelligible ; but when we turn from theology to life, we find, in fact, that it is the Crucified Christ, rather than the Incarnate Christ, Who conquers the hearts of

men. The Appeal of the Cross is an appeal to all, for all have sinned. And this, too, is suggested at many points in the pages which follow, and has been set forth more fully in Mr. Hitchcock's former volume on *The Mystery of the Cross.*

J. H. BERNARD.

St. Patrick's Close, Dublin.

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CHRIST AND HIS CRITICS

CHAPTER I

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

IN mystery we live and move and have our being. It is a strange world in which the babe opens its eyes. Life is secret and silent, like the Sphinx of the desert, and often sad as death. But in its problems it resembles the weird figure of ancient legend who took her station in the centre of the high road and propounded her riddle to all comers, destroying those who failed to guess it and disappearing when the tale was told. Those who approach prophet-wise to interpret the great soul of life scan in vain the bewildering lines of its face and form for some insight into its unfathomable meaning. For what man has ever robbed nature of her secret and seen into the very heart of things?

But yet science is bold, and raising her voice at Bradford[1] cries, "Great is science, and it will prevail." Yet science is but the discovery of what is and has been, and the forecast of what may be. She makes happy guesses now and then, as she traces with reverent finger the progress of the divine purpose as it works

[1] Presidential Address of British Association.

itself out, as it fulfils itself in the life of created things. But she creates nothing. She is not original. For as a schoolboy stupidly construes the Greek classics into his unfinished English, science but awkwardly translates the magnificent ideas of God into the meagre language of men, and vainly adapts the eternal principles of the great Creator to her passing moods.

But how often has she failed? The best prized ideas of one generation become the discarded traditions of the next. Is it any wonder that human efforts that begin in presumption should end in failure, unless they lead to God? At best we are like children at play on the shores of the infinite immensity. We see but the shadows that flit across the sands. The realities lie beyond our horizon. And yet, though we are on the extreme verge of things, our spiritual nature cannot but feel at times the palpitations, the throbbings of the divine life of God. This is the way of religion. It is not science, therefore, but religion that gives us hope and faith. The beginning of life may baffle us, the course of life may puzzle us, and the end of life may grieve us, but we who cling to a Personal God,

"That God who ever lives and loves,"

need not despair.

And yet no human-hearted man can help being touched by the saddening spectacle of vast multitudes, sin-burdened and sorrow-laden, struggling patiently and staggering blindly onward, whence they know not and whither they care not much. There is an infinite pathos in the silent way men suffer, in the stern way they blunder on through life. There is a

passionate intensity in the hopeless cry that rises from the depths of their soul for help and light, and for which no heart of flesh but must feel compassion. For what are we at best but

> "Infants crying in the night,
> And with no language but a cry"?

Men are moved to pity by the great sorrow of our race. And what of the great Father? Can we believe that the great Source of life and light, the great Eternal Being, who gave His own Son to save us, does not pity our strivings and our gropings? Can we believe that the Man of Sorrows, "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven," smiles with complacency upon the anxious hearts and bewildered minds of men? Nay, it was because God the Father felt for man that He gave His Son to take our nature upon Him and up to Himself. It was because God the Son felt with man that He bore the sin of the world and tasted death for every man. So only could the fainting heart of man be strengthened to encounter the problems of our many-coloured life. So only could the stricken soul of man be comforted and his difficulties removed. So only could he win the hope

> "That somehow good
> Will be the final goal of ill."

Think for a moment of that great mystery of Godliness which has shaped the course of this sphinx-like life for the past nineteen centuries, by giving man a new insight into the ways of God, a living faith in an all-powerful Friend, and fresh courage to rise above the force of circumstances and the depressing influence of natural environment.

"Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: Who[1] was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

In this passage is compacted as in a nutshell the kernel of Christianity, not one favourite doctrine, but the whole body of the truth concerning Christ which has shaken the world-power to its foundations and stirred the heart of man to its very depths. Confessedly great is the mystery of the Incarnation in its manifestation and its justification, in its power of winning men's faith and saving their souls. That is the mystery upon which the Church is built, and that is the mystery to which she tunes her songs of praise.

It was in the counsels of the Most High, or ever the foundations of the world were laid, to give to that race which then existed in His divine thought, but was not yet created by His divine Word, a perfect revelation of His own power, purity, and wisdom in the Person of His only-begotten Son. And when the time was ripe and the ground prepared to receive the divine seed of life, God became manifest in the flesh. And herein was the wisdom of God apparent. For it was a great opportunity for a full manifestation of the love and goodness of the Father, when men were weary of a philosophy, which created a want it did not supply, when men were tired of a carnal, God-forsaken existence, when they were cloyed with a paganism which they had outgrown, when their hearts were failing them for fear, when their self-reliance was giving way,

[1] There is another reading, *God*, but *Who* has the support of the best authorities.

and a yearning for a better state of things—a divine Utopia—had found utterance in the songs of poets and the visions of seers.

> "Then the Word had breath, and wrought
> With human hands the creed of creeds."

Then heaven stooped to earth and God was brought nigh to men, when the Son of God, the Second Person of the adorable Trinity, emptied Himself of His glory, and suffered the inexpressible brilliancy of His Godhead to become eclipsed in a human life and enshrined in an earthly tabernacle. Then the chain was forged anew that linked together the Maker and the man. Then through the surge and surf of sin and sorrow came One to the lost mariners on the lee-shore of life, to tell them who would read His signals, of a way of return to the haven where they would be. We understand not the how or the why of this profound mystery. We approach it with all humility and reverence, for it does not contradict our reason, it simply soars above it.

Doubtless it is not what we would have expected previous to God's revelation, and now that it has been revealed we do not see why it was so arranged. But our ignorance affords us no presumption against it. For the same blindness obscures every part of the divine economy. This mighty universe, which is regarded by us as the result of divine goodness and power, in many respects is not what we would have expected. We see not the use and end of many of its parts and functions. The apparent deformity of some things and the seeming banefulness of others, are mysteries not to be fathomed by the reason of man. And if such be the case in the natural world, the world

of physical life, is it not reasonable to expect that the moral world, the world of spiritual life, should have its dark and difficult things ?

Again, God is visible in the creation. Why should He not be seen in the redemption ? He condescends to manifest His physical power in the smallest creature, prompting its natural instincts and directing its natural movements. Why should He not manifest Himself in another and a higher way, by the mystical union of the Son of God with the nature of man ? That mystery is, indeed, incomprehensible to angels and men. As Irenæus wrote : " There is one Son Who performed the will of the Father, even He Whom the angels desire to see. But they cannot understand the wisdom of God by which His own creation, conformed to and incorporated in the Body of His Son, is brought to perfection, or how His Offspring, the First-Begotten Word, could descend to the creature and be contained by him ; and on the other hand how the creature could contain the Word and ascend to Him " (v. 36. 3). But it is none the less to be spiritually discerned and believed. Therefore, as the same Father writes : " The spiritual disciple will judge the Ebionites.[1] For how can they be saved unless He Who wrought out their salvation on earth be God ? And how will man pass up to God unless God has passed into man ? " (v. 33. 4).

And to argue in a more modern way : God condescends to supply the waste of the human body, why then might He not sound the depths of the human soul by a sympathetic assumption of it ? And given a personal God—would it not be more natural for Him to speak to His creatures than to be silent, to

[1] Who held that Jesus was the son of Joseph.

reveal Himself in a manner adapted to their limited intelligence, than to conceal Himself for ever from their view ?

God was manifest in the flesh. In the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God we see the goodness of God in His condescension to humanity, and the dignity of the human nature which the Deity assumed. For in this incarnation of the Word of God we have the highest ideal of human life. We see human life at its noblest and its best. Christ is "the central Personality," the recapitulation of human life. As the Creator of all things, the Word of God, as Irenæus well said,[1] "summed up all things in Himself," and thus contained the promise and potency of the final consummation and reunion of all things in Himself. And in His relation to humanity, He was not to be merely the revelation of God, as the Christian apologists regard Him, but He was to be also the salvation of man. For by His work of recapitulation He summed up and brought to a head in Himself the whole human race, its every age and condition, its enmity, its suffering and its death,[1] that He might redeem it from evil and restore it to its pristine state ; and that, as it was a beaten man that brought our race to death, through a victorious Man we might ascend to life.[1]

Two characteristics of that life most wanting in ours are purity and unselfishness. The disciples of Jesus are expected to think the things that be right and lawful. Whatsoever is honest and of good report, on these alone they should dwell. For the purity that the Son of Man manifested in His own life and requires in ours, consists of simplicity of purpose, singleness of heart, and sanctity of conduct.

[1] *Vide* Irenæus, *Contra Haereses*, v. 20. 2 ; v. 23. 2 ; and v. 21. 1.

Christians should, moreover, emulate the ungrudgingness of the Christ who gave all He had to give to man ; not always thinking what use others may be to them, but what use they may be to others, and trying to serve them, not with a view to win their favour and support, but with the object of inspiring them to follow His example, who has uplifted us by His cross to a brighter and happier life—and this from the highest motive of all, love of Christ and loyalty to His incarnate life. Christians should, therefore, be pleasant and kind to all sorts and conditions of men, no matter how ungrateful, undeserving, and selfish they may be. For love has a way to all hearts. Indeed, it is their duty to help others less fortunate than themselves to be contented and happy in the state of life in which God has placed them. For the Word of God " Who was rich became poor for our sakes," by becoming incarnate in a life that was not great, in the terms of men, but was great in the attributes of God. If the followers of the God-Man would allow His grace and truth to be manifest in their relations with their fellows, they would possess in their hearts the key that solves the mystery of His incarnation, even the love that is pure and the love that is self-sacrificing.

CHAPTER II

THE PREPARATION FOR THE INCARNATION

IT was for man that Christ became incarnate. All schools of theology are agreed on this point, even though one would assign as the chief reason of the incarnation the revelation of the Father ; another, the redemption of man ; and another, the gathering-up of all things into one head in Himself. According to Duns Scotus and his pupils, God would have become incarnate in an unfallen world, and as the Head of humanity would have offered up sacrifices eucharistic, not propitiatory ; but in the case of the Son of Man, the Representative of sinners, His obedience to the divine will took the form of expiation, and what would have otherwise been a thanksgiving to Almighty God became satisfaction to the All-just.

The Son of Man came, as the Scripture said, " to seek and to save that which was lost," to rescue the doubter from his doubts, to release the sinner from his sin, and to give light " to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death." As the Word of God, Jesus revealed the Father. As the Son of Man, He is the Recapitulation or ' Central Personality ' of our race ; He is the realisation of its ideal and the starting-point of its new development, and so He is justly called *Christus Consummator*. And as the Son of God He restores the image of the Father to man and redeems him from sin.

The mystery of Godliness was, therefore, revealed in the life of Christ, which was the visible expression, actual embodiment, and highest presentment of the love of God to man, in an age of worldly magnificence and spiritual despair. It was, accordingly, essential to the purpose of the Incarnation that He who revealed the Father to men and He who redeemed the souls of men, should be proclaimed among the nations and believed on by the world.

And for this proclamation the way had been divinely prepared in the economy of God. It was not only made at a time of great mental depression, moral despair, and religious unsettlement, when the hearts and minds of men were ready to receive a divine message of hope and cheer and love, but also at a time when the physical and social conditions of its development, the channels of its publication, and the oral medium for its announcement were peculiarly appropriate.

The world-wide language, the Greek, no longer, it is true, spoken or written in its classic finish, but perhaps in a more popular and pliable form, had become the great commercial language of the civilised world, and afforded a suitable medium for the communication of Christian ideas. The Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries had, in some ways, prepared men for the mysteries of the Christian faith. And the world-wide Empire, the Roman, connecting the leading nations of the earth in one vast net-work of military and civil organisations, by river, road, and sea, offered a large and well-arranged sphere of work to the new religion. This last fact is not so trivial as it may seem, for the student of the travels of St. Paul will find that he planned his missionary journeys according to the course of the Roman roads and the map of the Roman

Empire. It was to the pagan in the Roman states that he preached, as well as to the Roman colonist; but we never find him going outside the sphere of Roman influence to proclaim the gospel. For his Roman citizenship was a protection to the evangelist of the Cross. Would it be too far-fetched an idea to see, in this great Empire of Rome, an instrument, no doubt unconscious and unwilling, fashioned by God for His grand purpose of making known the plan of man's salvation to the nations of the world? That would be a fitting consummation of its glorious career.

"He was preached to the Gentiles"—chiefly by the writer who penned these words—St. Paul. That apostle ever loved to dwell upon the universal nature of the gospel that recognised no difference between bond or free, Jew or Gentile, Greek or barbarian. The freedom and equality in the gospel form the subject of that eloquent peroration of the Epistle to the Romans, in which the apostle commends his friends to Him that is able to confirm them, according to the gospel he proclaims and the doctrine of Jesus Christ that he announces, and boldly asserts that the mystery that had long been buried in the darkness of the ages is now brought to the light of day, and revealed at the bidding of the Eternal God to all the Gentiles, that so they may believe and obey. This great mystery, so long kept secret in the council chamber of the Most High, but which the inspired apostle was enabled to read, was the great purpose of God to extend the salvation which the Jew had regarded as his own birthright to the Gentiles "for the obedience of faith." This was a thing hard to be understood by the Jew, who imagined that he belonged to the one nation that had

preserved from pre-Mosaic times the true religion and worship of the only God. It was difficult for that exclusive nation to realise that its Messiah was to be the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe. It could not but perplex those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others, to be informed that God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. But if it were matter of surprise to them to find that Christ was preached to the Gentiles, it must have been more astonishing for them to find that He was actually believed on in the world; that He, who had lowered Himself in order that He might raise our nature to Himself, was acknowledged and confessed by those He sought to uplift, that men were empowered and inspired to recognise His divine nature and comprehend His divine purpose. This was the marvel. Mysterious, indeed, is the power of the Crucified. Truly the word of the Cross is to those who are stumbling in the way of perdition, foolishness, but to those who are walking in the path of holiness, it is the power of God. For it pleased God by the foolishness of that which is preached to save them that believe. As St. Paul said, when summing up the burden of his message, "For the Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Gentiles foolishness, but unto them who hear the call, both Jews and Greeks—Christ the power of God and Christ the wisdom of God."

It is a well-known fact that the two chief failures of humanity, or defects of man, revealed by the Son of Man are weakness and ignorance, feebleness of will and darkness of understanding. The divine wisdom

allowed one nation, the Jewish, to discover the helplessness, and another race, the Greek, to find out the ignorance of man. Therefore it was that the Jew was impressed by the power of God, the visible and tangible proof of His divine omnipotence. For him the wisdom of Jesus had no interest. He merely wished to see signs of His power. "Show us a sign, then." "What sign dost thou do, that we may see and believe thee?" "What dost thou work?" These and similar questions reveal the attitude of the Jewish mind to the Master's claims. Was it not a scandal, or cause of offence, to those who were looking forward to a Messiah enthroned in majesty to be pointed to one hanging in weakness and dereliction on an accursed tree, one they had judged a beaten and conquered man, and to be told that such a one had overcome the world?

On the other hand, the Greek, conscious of his ignorance of that which he wished to know, was seeking by way of philosophy and reason to reach the God of nature and mind. How absurd to such must the doctrine of the Cross have appeared! Here was no line of argument, no chain of reasoning, no convincing syllogism, no conclusive proof, merely the statement of a fact that seemed a paradox, a contradiction in terms. That a despised person, who perished on a cross, should be able to open the eyes of their intellect, and to furnish their souls with new motives, aspirations, and ideals; that one who could not save Himself from a felon's doom could rescue the minds of the wise from indecision and the hearts of the strong from despair,—seemed the height of absurdity. And yet, to the believing Jew, Christ was the incarnation of the power of God, and to the

believing Greek He was the embodiment of the wisdom of God. For the sublime and solitary instance of a man, not to say the God-Man, dying to save man from sin, was an irresistible appeal to man to be better, and an invincible argument that man can be better.

And we Christians think of our Master, not as a dead but as a living Lord, at the foot of whose Cross kneel not only the devoted believers in His divinity, but all those who were at any time and in any place uplifted by the example and inspiration of a life which was the highest embodiment of the thoughts of God in human deeds, the most perfect translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, the most Godlike that was ever lived.

"Far be it from me to glory," wrote that apostle who read the mind of the Master in the manner of a true disciple; "far be it from me to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world hath been crucified unto me and I unto the world." A whole world had been crucified for Paul when he realised that his Lord had died upon the cross. The world that slew his Lord, the world that could not tolerate or understand the divine life of his Master, had lost for ever the respect of the disciple. He can nevermore believe in the world, nevermore do it homage, never take pleasure or pride in its vanities or its crimes, or its grandeur or its glitter. There is a great gulf fixed for ever between the followers of the Christ and the servants of Mammon. The Cross is the line of division. The man who is not moved by the story of the Cross to live a better life and to work for others is not fit for the kingdom of heaven. A poor Mohammedan convert, when asked what

part of the gospel narrative had specially impressed him, said, "It was the story of the Cross that broke my heart and for ever took my pride away. The story of Him who died for man completely overwhelmed me." To those who read history aright there is but one all-conquering principle abroad, one supreme influence before which all men must bow and all institutions give way, and that is faith in the Crucified. Napoleon acknowledged that power when he said, that he and Alexander and Charlemagne had founded empires by the sword, but that Jesus alone had founded an empire upon love, and that millions were now ready to die for Him. As it was faith in Jehovah that nerved the arm of Gideon and fired the heart and imagination of David, so it is faith in the crucified Lord that has inspired all the brave struggles for reform that have followed in the wake of Christianity. It is faith in the Crucified and in the justice of His cause that has persuaded millions to cast their pride and their possessions at the foot of the Cross. Encompassed as we are by so great a cloud of witnesses, apostles, saints and martyrs, the heroes of the faith, whose names are writ in Heaven's roll of chivalry, shall we be found to refuse our allegiance to the Crucified, at whose word the multitude of the dead becomes the army of the living ?

In the Cross we see the symbol of our redemption, the power of Christ that achieves our deliverance from the world, the flesh, and the devil. Therefore we glory in the Cross. We are frail and ignorant ; therefore we glory in the power and wisdom of God, manifested in the Death that hath destroyed death and all its forces. We are creatures of sin and death ; therefore we glory in the Cross, because in its shadow

lies the only way to righteousness and life. Well saith Thomas à Kempis: "Go where thou wilt and seek whatsoever thou wilt; thou shalt not find a higher way above nor a safer way below than the Way of the Holy Cross."

CHAPTER III

THE KEY OF CHRISTIANITY

IN recent years theology has concentrated itself with special force upon the Incarnation. This doctrine is now felt to be the key of the Christian position. The idealistic view that matter is the function of mind, and the Alexandrian conception of the Logos or Word immanent in nature and soul are now popular, and have helped to give special prominence in our day to the doctrine of the Word made flesh. That theory falls into line with the splendid revelations and aspirations of science. The gradual ascent of man, the growth and evolution of nature, receive illumination and culmination in Him who is the Light and Crown of both man and nature, spirit and body. As a message to the intellect, the union of God and man in the God-Man Jesus Christ helps to solve many of the great problems of life—pre-existence, birth, suffering, death, and immortality, and the antinomies of free will and necessity, of the finite and the infinite. As a revelation to the mind that union reconciles the seemingly opposite ideas of a God in creation (*Deus immanens*) and of a God above creation (*Deus transcendens*), in One who is both indwelling in, and exalted above, the universe. That union illuminates the slow but sure development of the divine thought as it expresses itself in the material

it has selected for the vehicle and channel of its ideas ; and it gives spirituality to the laws of the universe, its growth and decay, its struggles and its survivals, its ruin and its resurrection, which now appear in the light of the Word made flesh as the methods of the divine workings.

What a glorious light is thus thrown on the great process of creation, that ladder of life that reaches from the earth as high as the heavens, from the humblest of God's creatures to the Son whom God "hath exalted above all" (Phil. ii. 9). And to us who look at nature as a whole, one vast organism, and regard its past history in the light of present achievements and future possibilities, that nature offers a stronger proof of the providence and forethought of the Creator than the old mechanical theories of the Deists and the argument of design.

And not alone nature but mankind is revealed as one great organism in the light of the Incarnation, and God is brought nigh to man and man is lifted up to God.

Such are some of the greater aspects of the Incarnation. In applying these lofty principles to the commonplace details of life, difficulties necessarily arise ; and to remove these men sometimes in their impetuosity clamour for a readjustment of the principles to correspond with the details, instead of patiently waiting to see if an adjustment is not possible.

And with regard to the great doctrines of Christianity, the Trinity of God, the Incarnation and the Atonement, we shall find that what our age requires is not so much a restatement but a reinterpretation of them, in order to bring them home to the hearts and minds of men and to show their bearing upon the

whole human life. There are, similarly, many problems of the Incarnation, touching our Lord's Personality, His Virgin-Birth and His real humanity, the relation of His human to His divine knowledge, the reconcilement of His sinlessness with His temptation, and the relation of His atonement to His incarnation, which can only be understood by keeping before us the One Personality, divine and human, of our blessed Lord. For if we suppress the Virgin-Birth we still do not get away from the mystery of the Incarnation; if we deny the divinity of Jesus we empty the Atonement of all meaning; and if we think only of that divinity do we not lose sight of the humanity which was no less beautiful and attractive than His divinity was sublime and unapproachable? It is only by facing these problems that are connected with the Incarnation, and by reverently and rationally seeking their solution, that we can hope to claim for Christian revelation the progressive thought of the age. For we are living in a reasoning age, when the thoughts and words of men can no longer be stifled by anathemas or threats of excommunication. Science need no longer work underground, she can raise her head with fearless confidence in her freedom. But in the exuberance of her liberty she has exceeded the limits of highest reason. Like the boy just delivered from the restraints of school discipline, she has fairly astonished the world and herself by the pranks she has played. But when the newness of her liberty has worn away, when she has time and leisure to begin to reflect calmly on her contributions to the moral position and equipment of the age, she may, it is hoped, become a sadder and wiser maid.

Those of us who read the magazines of the day cannot

but observe the growth of scepticism, and the increasing tendency to attribute everything in the world and the life of man to Matter and Force, and to leave God out of His own system.

In France, we have the sad picture of a whole nation become infidel. That infidelity is the direct result of free inquiry pursued beyond the limits of reason. There are things in this life of ours that man can never explain, there are mysteries about this life of ours that man was never intended to know. It is true that we cannot check that intense curiosity. We cannot say to the advancing tide of human thought, "Thus far shalt thou come and no further." But as the God of nature has appointed certain limits beyond which the restless ocean dare not pass, the God of reason has marked out a course which the reason of man must follow if it is to think clear, feel deep, and bear fruit well. But if that reason seeks to leave the path on which the heavenly light hath shined, it loses itself in the quagmires of the gloom like the child who follows the will-o'-the-wisp. While we are here we must submit to the divine control, we must follow the divine leading, we cannot penetrate that wall of darkness that envelops us and shuts out from our vision all that is beyond and above. To do so were to presume, and to presume were to court failure.

We do not number ourselves among the free inquirers. At the same time, we must take notice of the fact that the spirit of doubt and despair is spreading fast in the civilised world. We who represent the religion of Christ and who hold fast to the doctrines of life that have been given to man by His Church cannot afford to overlook an evil that is growing and spreading in our midst, like the tree Igdrasil rooted in death,

watered by the Fates, and overshadowing the life it represents. We cannot close our eyes or our ears to the onward march and clamorous tones of free thought. That were to follow the example of the foolish ostrich who buries his head in the sands and imagines himself safe because he cannot see or hear his enemies.

We must take account of these things. But, fortunately, there is no Inquisition to-day, before which they are to be reported and by which they are to be banned. For thought can never be constrained by an earthly tribunal. Nor would we stifle it if we had the means. But it is incumbent on us, as far as lies in our power, to guide it to a safe issue, to keep before it the limits of the human understanding, and to suggest to it a new method and a higher motive. When our children come to us with hard questions, before we answer them we make sure that they are really desirous of information and not trying to puzzle us—that is, we look at their motive. But, even if the motive be right, we are not always wise if we answer them as far as we know. There are some things they should not yet know. But as it would be a grievous wrong to check the spirit of inquiry, we must divert thought to another channel, we must suggest subjects for their study and learning. It is thus that God the great Schoolmaster deals with the reason of man. He desires our motives and our methods to be righteous and wise. It is in humility and reverence that man must approach the deep truths, the secret things of God, if he desires to know more fully of that way. For the bard of Scotland well said:

"An atheist's laugh's a poor exchange
For Deity offended!"

We must therefore allow ourselves to be instructed in the principles of revealed religion. We often tell our children facts without telling them the reasons for these facts. And because our children trust us they accept the facts and are satisfied for a time. Thus God has dealt with us. We are His children, weak, wayward, and wicked—but still His children, and we must be content to receive the facts of eternal life as they have been made known by Christ and crystallised in the creeds of His Church.

The Church in its great utterance at Nicæa did not lay down the law on every subject of man's questioning mind. Mark the wise reserve of the Creed. It knows when to speak and when to be silent. It states the fact of the Creation, but presents no theory of the process; it states the fact of the Incarnation, but suggests no explanation of that fact. It tells us of Redemption, Inspiration, Resurrection, but does not vitiate its statements with any challengeable hypothesis on these momentous interests of our mortal life, but expresses the sublime truths of revelation with a solemn, an awful brevity.

And that Creed, silent though it is on points that have disturbed the thoughts of men for centuries, contains all that is necessary for our salvation, being a concise abridgment of the gospel of Christ. And not being committed to any special theory of subjects on which men may hold opposite opinions, it may yet serve to unite the opposing parties of Christendom, and help to lead them to worship together under the shadow of a beautiful and sublime faith.

Men may differ as to the method of the creation. One may hold it is the result of the evolution of ages, which Fiske described as the "way God works."

Another may believe firmly in special creation, that all things have been as they are from the beginning of time. And yet both can unite in believing that the creation is the work of the same God. Other questions are likewise left open, but as regards the facts of revelation — Creation, Atonement, and Incarnation—there is no hesitation, no ambiguity. They are written down in plain and direct language, so that he who runs may read and understand. Of that hymn of faith, that rises like a triumphal arch above the Churches of Christendom, the confession of faith in Christ forms the keystone.

"And (I believe) in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten not made, Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made, Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate."

In this clear and emphatic summary of the facts connected with our Lord and His revelation, we have that which has been for fifteen centuries the Church's safeguard of her faith in her Master. And we shall thankfully sustain it. For the so-called Lives of Jesus that have been hurled broadcast upon the world by German and French rationalists, with the object to denude that life of miracle and divinity, as well as more recent works on His Personality and Virgin-Birth, prove to us that the very existence of our faith depends on our Christology, our views of the Nature and Personality of Christ. Christ Himself is the Key of the Christian's position. He is the foundation of

our religion. If that position be turned or that foundation be undermined, the whole fabric of our faith must totter to the ground. But when we hold the truth in Christ securely, we are strong even to overcome the world.

CHAPTER IV

THE VIRGIN-BIRTH

THE point of the Incarnation which offers the hardest problem to the modern mind is the Virgin-Birth. The reconciliation of two natures, the divine and human, in one Person presents even less difficulty than the Conception of the Virgin. The settlement of this difficulty would help us to solve this great mystery of the Incarnation—Granting that the Son of God became a weak babe, what of His Godhead all that time, and what was the function of the Second Person of the Trinity, if the Deity must be Triune for the proper expression of their Divine Personality? For it would suggest at least the final cause of such an incarnation, which was not a permanent self-annihilation but a temporary self-sacrifice to save the human race and make the soul of man as innocent as a child not born of the will of men but of God, a work congenial to the Divine Trinity, and one in which their divine functions might be appropriately exercised. On the subject of the Virgin-Birth there have been many ancient heresies. Irenæus in his third book, *Contra Haereses* (xi. 3), gives various theories propounded by the Gnostics regarding the mode of that conception. Not one of these, he says, admits that the Word of God became flesh, or that Christ is Saviour, or suffered on the Cross. Some say that

He descended like a dove upon Jesus of the dispensation and that He returned to the Pleroma when He had announced the Father. Some declare that Jesus of the dispensation passed through Mary as a tube, and others that He was the son of Joseph and Mary. On this subject Irenæus wrote with much feeling and power: "They who regard Him merely as man and the son of Joseph remain in their former state of disobedience. They despise the incarnation after a pure conception of the Word of God, and, depriving man of that ascent to God, show ingratitude to the Word of God Who became incarnate on our behalf. For the Word became man, and He Who was the Son of God became the Son of Man, that man united with the Word and receiving His adoption might become the Son of God" (iii. 19. 1). Again he writes: "From the Virgin Mother He took a real humanity, similar to ours, yet without sin. Otherwise His coming down to Mary had been superfluous. For why did He come down if He took nothing of her?" But he insists that it was "the Father of all by whose operation the Word became flesh" (ii. 1. 3).

From such a statement a great scientist of our day, Sir Oliver Lodge,[1] would derive "no sort of comfort or intellectual aid." But that statement was not made with the view "to deny that He was effectively man," but to prove that He who was believed to be the Word of God was effectively man. In our day the standpoint has completely changed. With the exception of the members of the Rationalist Press Association whose *Studies in Religious Fallacy* and *Pagan Christs* are a sufficient refutation of their premises and

[1] "Suggestions towards the Re-interpretation of Christian Doctrine," *Hibbert Journal*, 1904.

conclusions, no one now denies the historical character of Jesus of Nazareth. It is with His divinity and the miracles of the Virgin-Birth and the resurrection that men are more concerned in our days. Men like Sir Oliver Lodge allow that the Gospels give, in the main, a true presentation of our Lord's wonderful personality. He admits that Jesus is the "one supremely bright Spirit, Who blazed out nineteen hundred years ago, and was speedily murdered by the representatives of that class whose mission it appears to be to wage war against the prophets." They may confess that "Christ possessed a divine Spirit in excess to an extent unknown to us; that He was an embodiment of truly divine attributes, which as thus revealed we worship, may be willingly admitted; that He represents a standard or peak towards which humanity may try to aim is a tenable and helpful creed." But of this supreme, this unique life and personality, what is the explanation? Was He simply a son of Joseph in whom appeared a greater measure of the divine Spirit than was allotted to His fellows? Or was He what He claims to be and what His Church believes Him to be, the Alpha and Omega, the new beginning of humanity in whom all its past history was summed up and all its future possibilities were contained? Could the son of Joseph wield so potent, so mighty an influence over the lives of men? Could the son of Joseph give the bread of heaven, the living manna to the souls of men, or the balm of forgiveness and comfort of pardon to the sinful and penitent? And given that one miracle of Christianity, the appearance of a unique Personality, who has been a never-dying principle of spiritual regeneration to the souls of men, who has fascinated and attracted men by His wonder-

ful grace and love, whose truly divine attributes were so perfectly harmonised with genuinely human characteristics in one self-consistent life, and whose transcendent miracle was His own personality, so tenderly human, so sublimely divine, can we believe Him to be other than what He claimed to be—the Son of God ?

The whole trend of Christian thought, the whole tendency of His divine influence, the whole testimony of His divine life, is against any other explanation of His psychology, of His appearance among men.

He was no product of the past. History has no one even remotely similar to Him. And the record of the nations ever since proclaim Him to be the Author and Finisher of our righteousness and our faith. All His miracles form one connected system, as all His virtues, divine and human, belong to one Personality the truest and the most consistent in history. The Virgin-Born is the key of the Virgin-Birth.

How are we then to approach the doctrine of the Virgin-Birth ? Are we to regard His supernatural birth as the most natural explanation St. Matthew and St. Luke, and any Church historians who preceded them, could give of that supernatural life ? Or was it, as Lobstein says, " a myth created by popular devotion and destined to explain the divine Sonship of Christ by His supernatural generation." [1]

We must face, not shirk these questions. Some would veto all discussion on this subject as irreverent, if not impertinent. But that is the obscurantist policy in its worst form. Others, on the contrary, would pass over the subject as utterly irrelevant, and of no value to them. We are, therefore, obliged to state

[1] *The Virgin-Birth*, E. T., p. 110.

why we believe in the Virgin-Birth, if we have any reverence for the blessed Lord, or any regard for His Church which has placed its imprimatur upon it. The reason for our belief is twofold, external and internal, or *a posteriori* and *a priori*.

External Evidence

The external evidence consists partly in the account of the Nativity in the Gospel of St. Matthew (i. 18–25) and St. Luke (i. 34–35), and partly in the Apostolic faith behind these records. A determined attempt has been made to get rid of the documentary evidence. A solitary reading has been found in the Sinaitic Syriac manuscript discovered by Mrs. Lewis in 1894, namely, "Joseph (to whom was espoused Mary the Virgin) begat Jesus Who is called the Christ." But Professor Lobstein, who does not hold the Virgin-Birth, frankly states that "the antiquity of this manuscript is disputed, and it is impossible to estimate its historical character and value." And Professor Schmiedel, who wrote in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, "Jesus, the son of the carpenter Joseph and his wife Mary, was born in Nazareth," and who had no preconceptions in favour of the Virgin-Birth or of the received text of Matthew i. 16, "Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, Who was called the Christ," declares that the reading of the Sinaitic Syriac is of little weight. He wrote of it: "Some thought that we had suddenly come into possession of a text which completely changed the entire situation. In this they were mistaken. No doubt the Sinaitic Syriac contains the words, 'Joseph

[1] *The Virgin-Birth of Christ*, E. T., p. 121.

. . . begat Jesus,' but not without a parenthesis. The Sinaitic Syriac, however, contains at the same time the canonical text of St. Matthew i. 18–20. Taken as a whole, accordingly, this recently discovered translation brings in no new era ; of an older text it contains traces, and these are overlaid by the canonical text."[1] It is quite possible that the reading of the Sinaitic Syriac was due to the desire of a scribe, who was tracing the descent of Joseph, to make the genealogy complete and bridge over the immeasurable chasm between him and Jesus. He may have been an Ebionite, and as such would have felt no scruples in the matter, or he may have intended to express two ideas in one, viz., that Joseph was the husband of Mary and that Mary begat Jesus, who was called the Christ.

A similar reading, namely, that " Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary from whom was born Jesus, Who is called the Christ," is found in a Dialogue, published by Mr. F. C. Conybeare under the name of *Timothy and Aquila* (Oxford, 1898), but it cannot be allowed much weight, as it is a distinctly strange reading and was clearly influenced by the above-mentioned reading in the Sinaitic Syriac. But it is remarkable that Mary is emphatically described as *the Virgin* in the Sinaitic Syriac.

Are we, then, justified in rejecting the witness of St. Matthew on the strength of a reading which is clearly an explanatory gloss, a reading concerning which Canon Sanday says : " This eccentric reading has found its level. As it stands, it cannot possibly be original ; and however it arose it cannot affect the belief of the Church, as it introduces no facts which

[1] *Encyc. Bibl.*, iii. 2961.

had not been already allowed for.' But when all is said that can be said for and against these readings, *can we conceive it possible that St. Matthew or the Church teachers like St. Paul and St. John of the Apostolic age believed in the paternity of Joseph?*[1]

With regard to St. Luke's evidence of the Virgin-Birth, in i. 34, 35, which verses, according to Professor Schmiedel, contain the idea of the Virgin-Birth clearly and effectively, are we to be influenced by Professor Usener who informs us that to Hillmann belongs the credit of having shown that the only verses in the third Gospel in which the Virgin-Birth is stated are incompatible with the writer's representation of the rest of the chapters, i. and ii., and that they disturb the tradition, being fetters laid upon us by long habituation to a sacred tradition? Are we to regard these verses, on so recent an authority, as the interpolation of a redactor, or are we to believe in the Virgin-Birth on the authority of the Apostolic age and the early Church, which maintains that Virgin-Birth in her earliest creeds?[2] Are we to believe that the doctrine of the Virgin-Birth was allowed to depend on two verses, which are challenged by certain German professors but are upheld by two textual critics of the calibre of Dr. Blass and Dr. Eberhard Nestle? Is it likely, either, that St. Luke, to whose accuracy as an historian Professor Ramsay bears high testimony, could have given a record of the Virgin-Birth full of

[1] It is remarkable that neither St. Paul nor St. John say anything of the Virgin-Birth. But, while they do not refer to the unique, physical event of His actual birth, they dwell upon the assumption of our nature by the eternal, self-existing Son of God—which renders such an event intrinsically probable and fitting. For a unique event is suitably consummated by unique means.

[2] *Vide* Aristides, Justin Martyr, Ignatius, Irenæus, etc.

inconsistencies, or that he would have retailed a myth unknown to St. John or St. Paul, unless he had some greater authority than popular imagination or poetic tradition? Professor Lobstein would gild the religious myth "as being the spontaneous outcome of popular imagination and not the reasoned invention of forgers and impostors" (p. 21), and would explain away our faith in the supernatural birth of Christ as "the fruit of religious feeling, the echo of Christian experience, the poetic and popular expression of an affirmation of faith" (p. 97).

If the doctrine of the Virgin-Birth is the result of a myth, that myth must have sprung from either pagan or Jewish sources. On this point the critics are divided, some holding that the early Christians found a precedent in the mythological sons of the gods and heroes, and adopted a similar view of our Lord's birth in order to enhance the greatness of His origin with the Gentiles. Justin Martyr accordingly wrote, "If we allege His birth from a Virgin, you can take this as shared with Perseus," and "we assert nothing different from the story of the sons of Zeus." But Professor Lobstein, on the other hand, properly remarks that "the aversion which primitive Christianity felt for polytheistic paganism was so deep-seated that before supposing the new religion to have been influenced by pagan mythologies, we must examine with the utmost care the points of resemblance which are sometimes found to exist between beliefs and institutions" (p. 76).

Again, from that bias in favour of the religious and moral superiority of virginity, to which certain theologians point as a Gentile (Oriental and Hellenic) factor in the formulation of this so-called myth, the Gospels of the Nativity are singularly free. The

tradition of the Virgin-Birth could not possibly have been accepted by the Church on such Gentile authority or precedent, so that it is hardly correct to say with the *Encyclopædia Biblica* that "here we unquestionably enter the circle of pagan ideas." The analogies to the Virgin-Birth cited by early Christian writers were quoted, not as explanations of the origin of an idea, but to support deductions from a fact already believed. Justin Martyr, moreover, strongly differentiates the Gospel stories from the pagan legends invented in imitation of them by the wicked demons, in order to detract from their significance, and written " for the benefit and incitement of youthful students, since all men count it honourable to imitate their gods." The demigods of Greece owed their existence to human passion and lust. Is not any relation between such and Christianity as inconceivable as the origination of a myth in an age that was denuding itself of the pagan myths ?

Is the source of the belief Jewish ? In Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew,* the Jew says, " We all expect the Christ to be a man of men." This does not, at all events, indicate an expectation of a Virgin-Birth. In this connection it is to be pointed out that the prophecy in Isaiah, " Behold the virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son," in the original Hebrew does not signify any miraculous birth, for the word (*'almah*) is not *virgin* but *maid,* which was incorrectly rendered in the Septuagint by *parthenos* (virgin). And, therefore, though it was quoted by St. Matthew in connection with the birth of Jesus, it cannot be said to have originated the idea of that miraculous conception ; as a slight acquaintance with the Hebrew would have very easily exposed it as

a fallacy. Isaiah vii. 14 cannot, therefore, be regarded as the origin of this so-called "myth." And Dalman's words on this subject carry some weight. "No trace," he says, "is to be found among the Jews of any Messianic application of Isaiah's words concerning the Virgin's Son from which, by any possibility—as some have maintained—the whole account of the miraculous birth of Jesus could have derived its origin." [1] It is, furthermore, remarkable that St. Luke's narrative, in which are incorporated so many early Aramaic documents, now the hymns of the Christian Church, but whch are manifestly from a Jewish source, makes no reference to the prophecy of Isaiah.

Accordingly, we must insist that this article of our Creed rests upon a firmer basis than any Jewish or Gentile source, and that the declaration of Ignatius at the beginning of the second century, that "the virginity of Mary, her childbearing, and the death of the Lord are three mysteries to be loudly proclaimed, but wrought in silence by God" (*Eph.* 19), cannot have been inspired by or have originated from any myth, no matter how pious or profound, created by man to explain the divine Sonship of the Christ, or His sinlessness. That belief does not rest either upon the account of the Nativity in St. Matthew,[2] which has been attributed to Joseph, or that in St. Luke, which is assigned to the Virgin Mary, but upon the witness of the Apostolic age, the ultimate ground of our accept-

[1] *Die Worte Jesu*, E. T., 276.

[2] In a criticism of this and other prophecies of St. Matthew, Mrs. Humphry Ward assumes that St. Matthew invented facts to suit the prophecies, but if we may not assume the inspiration of the Evangelists, is it not more probable that they made fanciful applications of prophecy to suit their facts?

ance of the Gospels of the Nativity. Christianity is an historical religion. It is older than the New Testament, and its virtues are independent of any fate that may befall that Testament; they are part and parcel of our Christian consciousness. And among these verities is the miraculous birth of our Lord. All opinions, objections, theories, and explanations relating to that fact, no matter how ingenious and attractive, are subjective, they cannot alter the fact. That belongs to the sphere of history and is recorded in documents by no means remote from the facts they narrate.

We have considered the external evidence in support of this fact; we shall now consider the *a priori* argument, its inherent fitness.

The Inherent Fitness of the Virgin-Birth

This is quite a different thing from its inherent necessity, and is even a stronger proof of its intrinsic probability.[1] For we cannot say that God was limited to any one method of bringing about a corporate union of the human and the divine. When we consider the unique personality of Jesus, His unparalleled influence after He had passed beyond mortal ken, His marvellous

[1] When discussing the intrinsic probability of the Incarnation in *Divine Immanence*, ch. iv., Mr. Illingworth remarks in substance, that whereas we have positive knowledge of natural generation, that it does as a fact issue in a sinful person, we have no positive knowledge of virgin-birth, and that it is quite conceivable that "a mode of birth from which an essential factor of ordinary heredity is absent, should involve independence from hereditary taint." But virgin-birth in itself would not explain the sinlessness of Jesus. Such birth might be less contaminated, but would be only one degree removed from the ordinary conditions of human life. It was the divinity of Christ that was the cause of His sinlessness.

attractiveness and His immortal power; when we regard His superiority to man, His originality and authority as a teacher, and His sinlessness; and when we begin, as the early Christians did, from His resurrection, we are induced to accept the Virgin-Birth antecedently as the most probable account of the entrance of so extraordinary a Person into humanity. In other words, we believe that an essential truth underlies the words of Scripture, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God," because we believe in the divinity of our Lord. It was no religious "interest," no poetical interpretation of facts that created that superhuman character, that supernatural life. Can we, then, allow that such is the explanation of His miraculous birth? Is not the pagan instinct correct here, that the greater life implies the greater birth? For water cannot rise higher than its source.

But while a miraculous generation from a pure virgin was singularly appropriate for a virgin life, it is highly wrong to argue that such a birth was the explanation of such a life. For the attempt, as Professor Lobstein says, "to found the sinlessness of Christ on the miracle of His birth is altogether illusory and unfortunate" (p. 84). But who make this attempt except those who wish to find natural explanations for the supernatural, or to trace the probable course of the development of this so-called "myth" of the Virgin-Birth? The sinlessness of Christ was completely independent of His Virgin Mother, for the taint of sin is transmitted equally through either parent. Neither our Lord nor His

disciples account for His moral and religious purity by the fact of conception in the Virgin's womb. Such a connection would either lead us to Docetism or the view that Christ was not born *of* the Virgin but *through* her who was the reputed mother, or the Roman doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, according to which the mother was herself made free from the taint of original sin, and so back to the first mother by an unlimited chain of miracles wrought to preserve the special line which was to end in the Virgin-Mother and her Son intact. The sinlessness of Jesus was due to His divine nature. To that He appealed when He said, "Ye are from beneath, I am from above" (John viii. 23), and when He cried, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (John viii. 46). It would, indeed, be strange to find St. Matthew and St. Luke giving an explanation which was, if modern German critics are correct, unknown to St. John, of a fact especially emphasised in his Gospel, but not mentioned by the other writers. It would, indeed, be remarkable to find an earlier historian giving the explanation of a theory peculiarly connected with a later writer. But such a literary phenomenon would be only more remarkable than the attempt to find in the Augustinian theory of a fall of the human race and a hereditary taint transmitted from one generation to another, which is no doubt founded on Scripture and experience, but which is absent from the Synoptic Gospels and was only formulated in the fourth century, the explanation of the Virgin-Birth recorded in the Gospels of the first.

In the search for analogies and explanations of the Virgin-Birth men have made many wild and chimerical guesses, but the fact remains that the Christian con-

sciousness of the first century did not contain the idea of the paternity of Joseph—so abhorrent to all believers in the divine Sonship of Jesus, and so opposed to the main conception of Pauline and Johannine theology, "the conception of a Self, pre-existing throughout all eternity and taking in the womb of the Virgin either human nature in addition to the divine, or another form of existence following on the divine existence." [1] That conception cannot be opposed, *pace* Professor Lobstein, to the conceptions of St. Matthew and St. Luke. For both are distinctly opposed to any human fatherhood of the Son of God, "Who was in the beginning with God," even though they do not speak directly of His pre-existence, emphasised in the Fourth Gospel, which, however, His baptism and its mysterious revelation, His transfiguration (Matt. xvii., Mark ix., Luke ix.), and His words, "My Father's business" (Luke ii. 19), seem to imply.

Again, would it not be singularly fitting for One who was an independent fountain of humanity, who was, as Irenæus called Him, "a Recapitulation" or new beginning, "a central Personality," in whom is summed up and expressed in their highest form all that is best and noblest in humanity, to enter this sphere of life in a singular manner? We do not presume to enter into a discussion of the physiological and psychological conditions of that entrance, we cannot explain the process by which the Word of God became flesh, by incarnation and miraculous conception. The fact that He did so is sufficient to convince us that we have in the early narratives of St. Matthew and St. Luke, compiled long before the

[1] Lobstein, *loc. cit.*, p. 90.

facts and verities of the life of Christ became formulated as theology, something more than a theological presentment of the belief in the divinity of our Lord cast in narrative form. The substance of that narrative, the belief in the divine origin, is prior to, independent of, and unaffected by its form. And therefore it can hardly be said that that form "reduces the divinity of the Saviour to a mystery effected in the bodily organism," or that "it does away with His full and real humanity."[1]

But, on the other hand, belief in the paternity of Joseph does not, *pace* Godet,[2] "leave untouched the great object of faith, Jesus Christ's dignity as the Saviour"—for such paternal concurrence in the birth of Jesus is altogether incompatible with any "divine interposition which profoundly influenced and completely sanctified the appearance of this being,"[3] and would seriously interfere with the pre-existence and personality of the Son of God as well as with His incarnation. Of that event no process has been revealed except that by which the Son, the Word of the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance. Would any of the German critics worship the Son of Joseph? Would they regard the son of Joseph as their Lord and their God? If any of the disciples of Jesus knew of His birth from Joseph, would they have thought of Him as their Lord? Would they have believed in His resurrection? Would they have exalted Him above the common level of humanity? Would they have describe dHim as the Son or as the Word of God, if they held that the co-operation of an earthly father was necessary to His birth, that is, if they thought of

[1] Lobstein, *loc. cit.*, pp. 106, 108. [2] i. 161. [3] *Ibid.*

it at all ?[1] Would John, to whose care the Virgin Mother was entrusted, and who must consequently have known of His origin better than the others, that is, presuming of course that the Virgin revealed her secret—have, on the one hand, avoided all mention of Joseph the husband of Mary, and, on the other hand, described his Master as "the Word who was with and was God," if he believed in the paternity of Joseph ? Assuredly not, and therefore we are justified in holding that the disciples of Jesus found no difficulty in His wonderful birth and resurrection, because in the first instance they believed in Him as the Son of God. They believed in Christ before they knew the story of His birth. And we who believe in Jesus as divine, as "the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," are prepared to accept a fact which is, as has been sufficiently demonstrated, confirmed by a double line of proof, external evidence and inherent fitness.

[1] Matt. xiii. 55, "Is not this the carpenter's Son ?" This quotation in St. Matthew's Gospel, perhaps a later form of St. Mark, vi. 3, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary ?" shows that the editor of this Gospel was not unaware of the questionings about the origin of Jesus in His day.

CHAPTER V

THE BOY JESUS

AS Irenæus well observed, our Lord did not make Himself any exception to the natural law of humanity, but passed through every age of human life and sanctified it by the likeness of His own. "For He came to save all through Himself, all who are re-born in God through Him, infants and children, boys and youths, and elders. Therefore He passed through every stage of life, being made an infant for infants, to sanctify infants; becoming a child for children, sanctifying those of like age, and at the same time giving them an example of piety, righteousness, and obedience, and becoming a youth among youths, being their example and sanctifying them to God" (*Contra Haereses*, ii. 22. 4).

But of the childhood and youth of the Master there are only two notes preserved in the Gospel memoirs, the narrative of the scene in the Temple and the suggestion implied by the question of the Jews in Mark vi. 3, "Is not this the carpenter, the Son of Mary?" The inspired recorders of the Gospel of Jesus passed over that portion of His life, not because it had no interest to them, but because it was with the mature life, doctrine, and revelation of the full-grown Teacher, the perfect Master, that they were concerned. A sacred veil is thrown over His boyhood

and youth, which is moved aside to give us that momentary glimpse of the immortal scene of the divine Boy, seated among the Jewish Rabbis, that is imprinted on the memories of the youngest and oldest, and that has given a theme to the poet and a subject to the painter.

This was the first appearance of the boy Jesus in public. His twelfth year marked a new epoch in His life as a Jew and in His career as the Son of God. In that year He was presented by Joseph in the synagogue of Nazareth, was permitted to read out of the Book of the Law in public, was called no longer "small" but "a son of the law." And in that year He had come with a strongly growing consciousness of His origin and His business to His Father's house, and to commence His Father's business. From the retirement of His home among the hills, in the brilliant season of the spring, the little family have set out with one of the caravans of pilgrims, and having spent a week of glad reunion and religious emotion in the presence of all that was hallowed in their memories and sacred in their eyes, they have again departed. But Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem. Why or with whom He tarried we cannot tell. On the following day Mary and Joseph missed Him. Their sorrow and distress can be more easily imagined than described when they found Him not. Sadly they retraced their steps, Mary to seek for Him, the secret of whose divine birth she carried in her mother's breast, Joseph to look for Him whose infancy and childhood he had jealously and faithfully guarded and saved. To their great amazement they found Him quietly seated among the learned doctors of the law, listening to them and asking them questions. The Arabic Gospel of the

Infancy would represent Him as having cross-examined and puzzled the doctors "each in turn," but the Gospel of St. Luke gives the picture of One who was modest and respectful to His elders and whose love for knowledge and gentle bearing won their esteem and elicited their admiration. It matters not to us who these doctors were or what the topics of conversation might have been. The Evangelist rivets our attention upon the natural question of the mother and the memorable correction of the Child. "My child, why hast thou done so to us? Thy father and I have sought thee in distress." And He answered, "Why is it that ye sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about *My Father's* business?" or as some prefer to render it, after the Syriac and the Greek idiom, "Did you not know that I must be in *My Father's house*?" But they did not understand His words. Then He returned with them to Nazareth and was obedient unto them.

This is the first and last glimpse we have of the boyhood of Jesus. It is one solitary ray flashed forth from His hidden majesty that reminds us that, though He was perfect man as we are, we are not perfect as He was. He was the same as we are, yet different. This is a paradox, a contradiction in terms. But how else can we describe that divine life which came from God to bring others to God? In Jesus God and man were reconciled. The divine had taken up the human in the person of the God-Man. Human language is baffled by so wonderful an event, which is simply indescribable in words. Is it not remarkable that the Evangelist who dwells most upon the divine generation of Jesus lingers most upon the details of His human birth; he who records the descent of the Spirit upon

the Virgin (Luke i. 34–35), describes accurately the Mother's conception and delivery, the Child's birth and cradling and circumcision? While insisting on the divine origin and miraculous generation of Jesus, St. Luke would keep before us His perfect humanity. We do not disparage the nature of Christ when we describe Him as human; but we detract from the greatness of His sacrifice when we forget His humanity. The key to the understanding of the mystery of the Word made flesh, as has already been pointed out, is given in the Epistle to the Philippians—"He emptied Himself by taking upon Him the form of a servant and becoming in the likeness of man." From the high levels of His divinity we must descend to the vale of His humiliation, if we are to derive any benefit from His example and teaching. But we must not forget His divinity when trying to understand His humanity. Nor can we do so, for when we read the story of His life and passion for man, the thought forces itself upon our minds that there was and is nothing so sublime, so divine in the history of the world as the character and personality of the Christ.

But having become man He grew like other men in stature and wisdom. He emptied Himself of His divine power, glory, and knowledge, that He might live as man, be tempted as man, suffer as man, and die as man for the sins of man. "He grew in wisdom." What was that wisdom? It was not the wisdom of the world, but the wisdom of God. It was not in the self-sufficient philosophy or in the secret mysteries of Greece; it was not in the calculations of the Egyptians or the discoveries of the scientists that He made progress. It was not in "physics and metaphysics, hyperphysics and hypophysics, that He

excelled; not in worldly prudence, book-lore, and erudition that He advanced." But, as Adolphe Monod well said, "it was in that wisdom so often praised in the books of Solomon, of which the first lesson is, "Fear God and keep His commandments." It was from such a wisdom that the first recorded words of the Saviour came, "Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house?"—words that have so important a bearing upon the lives of His followers. From them Christians learn that they have a work to do for God and a worship to offer Him. Like that Boy with the angel face and the glory of heaven upon His brow, who saves our boyhood by His boyhood and our manhood by His manhood, we too should be found constantly in the house of God, continually meditating upon His holy Word and unswervingly doing His business. Amid all the uncertainties of life one thing should be certain and clear to us all—that we have each a work to do for God, and that the best preparation for that work is to be constantly in His house, praying to Him and hearing His word to us. For if work is a form of prayer, as the monks of olden days used to say, prayer is also a form of work. If the motto, *Ora et labora* (pray and work), be ours, it shall guide us nearer to Him whose human life is the pattern after which ours are to be shaped, and upon whose divine power our lives here and hereafter depend for salvation and happiness.

He who grew from stage to stage as we do, who felt the sting of temptation perhaps more than we do, who spent His life in communion with His heavenly Father and in doing His will, bids us also to be about our Father's business and in our Father's house.

CHAPTER VI

THE TEACHER OF JESUS

IN two exquisite sentences the Evangelist St. Luke describes the beauty and sweetness and grace of His youthful days. "But the child grew up and became strong in spirit, becoming filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him";[1] and "He made progress in wisdom and age, and favour with God and man."[2] Our Lord's youth is described as a natural human process. He had submitted to the conditions of our mortality, and He did not transcend them in the growth and development of His perfect manhood and His natural life.

There is something wonderfully Christ-like in this silent boyhood and youth. The growth of His consciousness as the Son of God was too solemn to be discussed, too sacred to be divulged. In those years of stillness and prayer the Son was being prepared for His revelation of the Father, and His own mission and passion. That preparation has all the appearance of being a harmonious and even development. Behind the period of Jesus' life that we know there lies, as Professor Harnack admirably remarks, "no crisis of storm, no breach with the past." We cannot associate with the personality of Jesus, as with the Baptist, any hysterical conversion or religious excitement.

[1] Luke ii. 40 (Codex Alex.). [2] Luke ii. 52.

His life was no torrent or cataclysm, breaking wildly from the mountain side and bounding fiercely across the plain, astounding and terrifying men by its fury and its suddenness. His personality was no apparition suddenly presented to Himself and to others. But in that perfectly balanced life we see a gradual deepening of the channel of divine grace, and the waters of divine mercy ; we observe a gradual strengthening of His human soul in the knowledge of His divine origin and in the consciousness of His divine mission ; and in the river of His Humanity, broad, strong, and clear as crystal, we see reflected the faultless image of the Son of God, the off-ray of the Father's glory.

The Gospels record no miracles, no wonderful, startling deeds of the gentle youth who lived in Nazareth with Mary and Joseph. The world seemed unaware of His presence. He did not, we firmly believe, make Himself conspicuous by the performance of signs and wonders. No infant prodigy was here, no precocious child ; but a Boy who was growing in wisdom and years, and favour with God and man ; a Boy whose human soul was gradually being prepared for the grandest revelation that ever was vouchsafed to the sons of men, but whose human will was being gradually disciplined into conformity with the will of His Heavenly Father, and trained to wait for the Father's " hour."

In the Apocryphal Gospels we find the gracious and divine Child of the true Gospels surrounded by a halo of myth and romance, of legend and invention, that mars that unique and marvellous character. He is represented as drawing continually upon His divine powers, without any object save that of pleasing Himself. He who never wrought any miracle during

His ministry, save in compassionate love for man or as a sign of His mission and a revelation of His Father's character, is described as carrying water in His robe, making live sparrows out of clay, stretching a short board to the required length, and, still worse, turning His companions into kids and rebuking His elders. The boy who is presented in the Gospel pages as loving, obedient, and wise, is here misrepresented as unkind to Mary and Joseph, cruel to His playmates, and unpopular among them. Even the best of the stories of the Apocryphal Gospels in which the comrades of the boy Jesus are described as crowning Him with a wreath of flowers, waiting upon Him and making all who passed come and adore their boy king, is foreign to the life and character of Him who would not be made a king by those He had fed in the wilderness. Have we not a proof here that none but an inspired hand could touch the picture of the Christ without spoiling it? Have we not here a broad line of demarcation between the inspired and the uninspired writings?

Many would fain know how Jesus spent His youthful years, like the bishop, of whom Luther tells the quaint story, that he had a dream in which he seemed to see a carpenter working at his trade, a boy picking up the chips, and a maiden in green calling them to their meal, while behind the door he saw himself standing. Then the boy asked, "Why does that man stand there? Shall he not eat with us?" Whereupon the bishop awoke. "Be this truth or fable," observes Luther, "I believe that Christ in His childhood and youth looked and acted like other children, yet without sin, and in fashion like a man."

But it is much wiser to overcome our curiosity

than to think anything inconsistent with the character of Jesus. That He followed the trade of Joseph, that He helped His Mother in her home, that He was a dutiful and gracious child, is quite sufficient for us to know. The life of reserve and retirement which the Gospels describe is more consistent with the taunt of His brethren, "Depart hence and go into Judæa, that Thy disciples also may see the works which Thou doest. For no one doeth anything in secret and seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things show Thyself to the world" (John vii. 3–5), and is more in keeping with the secret of His marvellous birth than with those insipid and impossible narratives. The very fact that He did nothing wonderful in His boyhood was itself a kind of wonder, as Bonaventura observed: "In His very inactivity, retirement, and silence there was power, the power of self-restraint, of self-knowledge."

Of that period of seclusion and silence only one saying is recorded, one saying that bears the stamp of its high origin, simple and profound, tenderly human, sublimely divine—"Why is it that ye sought Me, wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" or as some prefer to translate, after the Syriac version and the Greek idiom, "Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?" That saying in its perfectly blended dignity and devotion, in its humility and reverence, was appropriate to the youth of the Son of Man, was in keeping with the general character of the Saviour. It affords an indication of the growing consciousness of His origin and His mission. It shows the direction in which the current of His life had set. It is a sign of the thoughts and feelings that already inspired the soul of the Son of Man. It is, accordingly,

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as vastly superior in natural beauty as it is in spiritual dignity to any of the apocryphal sayings of Jesus, be they long or lately discovered. Take up for a moment the Logia, or Sayings of Jesus, which have been unearthed from the rubbish heap of Oxyrynchus and published by Messrs. Grenfell & Hunt.

"1. And then shalt thou see clearly to draw out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

"2. Jesus saith: Except ye fast in regard to the world, ye shall not find the kingdom of God; and except ye keep the Sabbath rightly, ye shall not behold the Father.

"3. Jesus saith: I stood in the midst of the world, and in the flesh was I seen of men, and I found them all drunken and none found I athirst among them, and My soul grieveth over the sons of men because they are blind in their heart, and do not see their poverty.

"4. Jesus saith: Wherever they may be, men are not without God, and wherever there is a man alone, I am with him.[1] Raise the stone and thou shalt find Me, split the wood and I am there.

"5. Jesus saith: A prophet is not welcome in his own city, neither doth a physician work cures on them that know him.

"6. Jesus saith: A city which is built and firmly founded on the top of a high hill can neither fall nor be hid."

Such sayings as these, no matter how beautiful they may be, compared with the original sayings of the Gospel, of which they are imitations in forms that are generally adaptations of the Hebrew parallelism, are as dross to pure gold. They lack the finish,

[1] This appears to be the rendering of a very difficult passage.

the charm, the simplicity, the dignity, and the naturalness of the sayings of the Gospel. They are second century duplicates and imitations that are conspicuously devoid of the stamp of authority, the naïve grace of such a saying, " Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business ? "

How did the Master acquire that wonderful charm of word as well as look ? Was it from Hillel, that " sweet and noble " rabbi, that he learnt it ? Are the words of Renan in his *Vie de Jésus* correct ? " In His poverty, modestly endured, in the sweetness of His character, in His opposition to the hypocrites and the priests, Hillel was the master of Jesus, if it is permissible to speak of a master in the case of so lofty an originality ? " Is the Rabbi Geiger right when he says, " Jesus was a Pharisee who walked in the paths of Hillel, and uttered no new thought. Hillel, on the contrary, presents us with the picture of a genuine reformer ? " Has the remark of Gratz, " The gentleness and modesty of Jesus remind us of Hillel, whom He seems generally to have taken for His example," any foundation ? While we Christians cannot but appreciate the tribute which is indirectly paid to our Master by this comparison with " the gentle, the holy, the scholar of Ezra," yet we cannot but feel the inadequacy of such a comparison. What has the teaching of Hillel done for the world ? How has the life and death of Hillel affected the fortunes of humanity ? He was doubtless an excellent rabbi, and uttered many wise saws, such as, " What is unpleasing to thyself do not to thy neighbour," but he resembles the Master in wisdom and grace, in breadth and height of teaching, as the candle resembles the sun. The Son of Man, who has come to seek and to save that which was lost, was

completely independent of the instruction of him who said, "No uneducated man easily avoids sin, no common person is pious." The Son of Man who founded the Kingdom of God for the poor and despised had none of that pharisaical pride and exclusiveness of which Hillel had his share. He spoke with authority when the other quoted authorities. His themes were love, righteousness, and mercy, while the other discussed subtle evasions and irrelevant questions of the law. The picture of the scholar buried in a fall of snow while listening to a lecture belongs to quite an inferior category and lower classification of ethical life than the picture of the Master of men teaching on the sunlit summit of the Mount of Beatitudes.

It was not from Hillel, therefore, that that Master learned His wisdom, nor was it from Hillel that He acquired His grace. Neither was it from the Essenes that He learnt His methods; nor was it from the Greeks that He obtained His philosophy. As Harnack well says, "He nowhere speaks as a man who has assimilated any theological culture of a technical kind or learnt the art of scholarly exegesis. . . . He lived and moved and had His being in the sacred writings, but not after the manner of a professional teacher." Again he writes: "The picture of Jesus' life and His discourses stand in no relation with the Greek spirit," and "that He was ever in touch with the thoughts of Plato or the Porch, even though it may have been in some popular redaction, it is absolutely impossible to maintain."

Who then taught Him but the Spirit of God, who made clear to His inner soul His relation to the Father, and that Father's law? It was the Spirit of God who taught Him to read the Scriptures of the law and

prophets in the light of His incarnation and self-sacrifice, and to find their fulfilment in His own life and passion. It was the Spirit of God who taught Him to love the glad scenes of nature, the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field. There is none of the school-room tradition in His teaching, nothing of the Jewish lecturer in this Teacher. The Spirit did not initiate Him in the subtleties of the Jewish law, the philosophies of Greece and the East, the science of the Arabians or the astronomy of the Chaldæans, but in the mysteries of godliness, of which His own incarnation was not the least. We are not breathing here the stifling air of the lecture hall, but the sweet breath of heaven, as the great Master strikes the highest notes ; as He touches the greatest chords of human life, hope, and destiny ; as He deals with the needs of the human soul ; as He tells of the Love of the Heavenly Father ; as He preaches love ; as He offers peace. He is armed with the divine authority, not with rabbinical precedent. His soul is possessed in a divine calm, and penetrated with a divine compassion. His words fall as a voice from heaven upon the ears of men, now gently persuading, anon sternly rebuking, but inevitable and inexorable. And His wisdom is like the sea that delights the child with the ripples on its surface, but holds and thrills the man with the wonder of its unfathomed depths. The loftiest wisdom is enshrined in the simplest language, the most spiritual conceptions are conveyed in the words which a mother might use when speaking to her child.

> "Which he may read who binds the sheaf,
> Or builds the house or digs the grave ;
> Or those wild eyes that watch the wave
> In roarings round the coral reef."

Taking His illustrations from the most ordinary incidents of life, the implements of the farm, the furniture of the house, our Lord in His loving and attractive way opened the pages of the book of nature, and showed the foresight and goodness of the Father writ large therein. How simple and how deep these lessons were! Simple enough for the simplest to understand, because dealing with the facts of life, and deep enough to edify the wise, because throwing a searchlight upon the principles of life. The parables and illustrations of the Master have arrested the attention and delighted the intellect of the world's greatest sons. Utterly devoid of the sensational, these lessons are impressive because true. They are also easily retained, for the Master was the best Teacher man ever had. No one knew better than He the laws of the human mind and the association of its ideas. For as we read in Ecclesiasticus iii. 29, "The heart of the prudent will understand a parable (*παραβολήν*), and an attentive ear is the desire of a wise man." [1]

Such was the channel of his instruction, the form of His expositions, a garb sufficiently attractive to clothe His great ideas which are likewise simple and sublime. His absorbing thought is His relation to the Father and His mission to man. His transcendent theme is the Kingdom of God and its possessors. There is nothing earthly in the tendency of this teaching, although it consecrates the things of

[1] Ecclus. vii. 35. "Let not the parables (*παροιμία*) of understanding escape thee." "He that hath ears to hear, etc." (Mt. xi. 15); and "Without a parable spake He not unto them" (Mt. xiii. 34; Mk. iv. 34). Many of our Lord's sayings and illustrations are taken from Ecclus. (cf. Matt. xi. 29 sq., and Ecclus. vii. 25–28; Mt. xxiii. 12 and Ecclus. i. 30.)

earth, the sunshine and sunset, the wind and rain, the sea and the storm, the seed and the corn, the rivers and the trees, the hills and the plains, the clouds and the darkness of night. The origin of this teaching is not human; although it sanctifies the bodily needs and spiritual aspirations, the daily labours and losses, the hourly toils and troubles of mortality. But it was the wisdom of the Word incarnate, who had created both mind and matter, and who has in His human soul being gradually led by the Spirit of God deepening the consciousness of His divine mission, confirming Him in the paths of His obedience, and directing Him to the goal of His self-sacrifice. This was the source of that doctrine Hence were derived its universality and its sympathy; its applicability to all forms of humanity, every phase of life, every class in the community, and its intense spirituality, so free from the cant of fanaticism, so full of the charm and love of One who saw all life bathed in the glow of the Father's love, and desired to behold all men redeemed by the life of the Son. Hence He was able, with the delicate touch of the scholar's love for the written word, to bring once more into prominence the text of the Torah and the Prophets, and to unearth it from the pile of traditions and interpretations that had covered it in a dismal grave. Hence He was able to reveal with exactness the hidden meaning of isolated passages, such as Psalm cx., and in His comprehensive mind to discern the drift, and in His comprehensive way to describe the issue towards which the manifold prophecies of the Old Testament converged; to gather up in His hand the scattered threads of Jewish hopes and weave them into a texture without a seam; and to find in His life

and advent the focus of their scattered rays of light. Of His own reading of prophecy we have the following example on the journey to Emmaus—"O foolish, and slow of heart to believe *all* that the prophets have spoken. Ought not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and the prophets, He interpreted to them in *all* the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke xxiv. 25–27).

As it was the Holy Spirit who led Him into the wilderness to be tempted; who taught Him to wait for His Father's hour; and who reminded Him of the Father's purposes and His own relation to that Father, so it is the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in His Name, who shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not on Him; of righteousness, because He goeth to His Father; and of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged; who shall take His place in the Church, lead His people into all the truth, and bring back to their remembrance all that He hath said to them. Upon Him that Spirit descended in the manner of a dove and abode at His Baptism.[1] To Him, as the Baptist bore witness, the Father gives not the Spirit by measure.[2] Of the Spirit He was full, and by the Spirit He was led into the desert.[3] In the power of the Spirit He returned into Galilee.[4] By the Spirit of God He cast out demons.[5] Through the Eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God.[6] He gives the Spirit to those who believe on Him.[7] In the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple to greet His first appearance.[8] In the Holy

[1] John i. 23. [2] John iii. 34. [3] Luke iv. 1.
[4] Luke iv. 14. [5] Matt. xii. 22. [6] Heb. ix. 14.
[7] John vii. 39. [8] Luke i. 27.

Spirit He shall baptize.[1] In the Spirit He hath been justified.[2] By that self-same Spirit we are built up a habitation of God in Christ.[3] By that one Spirit Jews and Gentiles have their approach to the Father through Christ.[4] By that Spirit the mystery of Christ is revealed to His holy apostles and prophets.[5] That Spirit beareth witness that Jesus is the Son of God.[6] That Spirit revealed the Son of Man in all His glory to the seer on Patmos.[7] That Spirit pronounces the message of the Churches ;[8] proclaims the blessing on the dead which die in the Lord.[9] And to Him the Spirit and the Bride say, Come.[10]

Is it any disparagement to that Master to regard His human career as guided and directed by that Spirit of God, by whose operation He became incarnate, by whom He was justified, and who is the chief witness of His divinity, the confirmer of His messages, and the controller of the destinies of His Church ? And is it not the Master Himself who said, " Every one who shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him : but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven.[11] That Holy Spirit will teach us what to say in our hour of trial.[12] He will teach us all things. He will guide us into all the truth. He will show us things to come. He will glorify Christ, for He shall receive of Christ's and declare it unto us.[13]

And so what might seem an inferiority of function in the human nature of the Son of Man leads to a superiority of function in the Person of the Son of God.

[1] Matt. iii. 11. [2] 1. Tim. iii. 16. [3] Eph. ii. 22.
[4] Eph. ii. 18. [5] Eph. iii. 5. [6] 1 John v. 6.
[7] Rev. i. 10. [8] Rev. ii. 7. [9] Rev. xiv. 13.
[10] Rev. xxii. 17. [11] Luke xii. 10. [12] Luke xii. 12.
[13] John xvi. 13, 14.

CHAPTER VII

THE "LIVES" OF JESUS

Apocryphal and Jewish

IN the early days of Christianity several well-meant attempts were made to expand the Gospel narrative and to glorify the Christ. The results, however, embodied in the Apocryphal Gospels, the Protevangelium, or Gospel of St. James, the Pseudo-Matthew, and the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy, are sufficiently disappointing and degrading to discourage any attempt on our part to add to what has been revealed. These additions to the Gospel life of Jesus are made after the manner of the Jewish Hagadoth, or legendary explanations of the Scriptures, and with the view of enhancing the Christ. But, by filling in the years the Evangelists passed over in silence with un-Christlike wonders and miracles, they distort and disfigure the character and personality of Jesus.

Classical writers do not contribute much to our knowledge of that life. Tacitus makes a passing allusion to the crucifixion. And certain passages in Lucian are evidently intended as a satire on Christianity. Josephus and Justus of Tiberias are silent, while the writers of the Talmud record gross calumnies which answer themselves. The Talmud, or oral

tradition of the Jews, was not put into writing before the fifth century A.D., and according to the great commentator Rashi, "near his own time," that is, about the ninth century A.D., and, therefore, is utterly useless material for the historian. A recent writer, Mr. J. M. Robertson, in his *Studies in Religious Fallacy*, however, is clever enough to find the nucleus of the Gospel story in one "Jesus, son of Pandora, mentioned in the Talmud, as hanged on a tree and stoned to death at Lydda in the reign of Alexander Jannæus." He might just as well have taken as the source of the Evangelical narratives the story in the Talmud, referred to by Bishop Lightfoot on Matt. xii. 24, namely, that Jesus was a pupil of Joseph Ben Perachiah who is said to have lived a century before His time, accompanied him into Egypt, there learned magic, was a seducer (*mesîth*) of the people, and was first stoned, then hung as a blasphemer, after forty days, in which no one came forward to speak on his behalf.

It is perhaps something to be thankful for that the aggressive infidelity of our day is contented with denying the historical character of our Master without raking up the foul and blasphemous slanders of the *Toldóth Jeshu*, which even Jewish authorities regard as a pitiful and contemptible compilation. Indeed, the more enlightened Jews of our day show a respect for the life of Jesus which some so-called Christians would do well to emulate.

We now turn to another class of "Lives" of Jesus written to explain the Christ, the growth of His Church and the success of His Mission—the "Lives" of the German and French rationalists, many of

which breathe a deep piety and reverence for the holy character of Jesus, but all of which, more or less, seek to explain that character and influence on natural principles. Ever since Hess published his *History of the Life of Jesus*, in 1768, one of their first attempts to explain and defend the Gospel miracles, scarcely any German theologian has omitted to put forward a Christology of some kind. Herder, Paulus, Schleiermacher, Hase, Neander, Ebrard, Weisse, Ewald, Keim, Baur, Strauss, Wendt, and Harnack, are a goodly list of writers who have shown a deep interest in the life, personality, and Gospels of our Lord. As it would be impossible to notice all these various conceptions of Jesus, it will be necessary to confine our attention to a short account of the principal theories of Jesus of which Baur, Strauss, Renan, Harnack, and Loisy are the representatives.

It is not wise to imagine that Baur's tendency-hypothesis has been wholly exploded. Modern writers are reproducing his arguments. Baur's explanation of the genesis of Christianity is of a piece with his reading of history. Men who lived and wrought are but the embodiment of "the idea," or the mouthpiece of the "tendency." Human and historical characters are bereft of their individuality; they vanish into smoke; they do not act or think or speak; the idea or the tendency incarnate in their bodies attends to such matters. Christianity, according to Baur, is the result of a compromise between two parties in the Church, one of which was led by the Apostle Paul, who held that the gospel was for all on equal terms, while the other party was captained by the original Apostles, who insisted on the perpetual obligation of the Jewish law. Christianity is, on this

view, the outcome of a development from a conflict between these rival tendencies, of the proclamation of a universal religion and the claim of Messianic privileges. And the idea of the Teacher's divinity was the outcome of the love and reverence of His followers, who, if Baur is right, were but poor deluded creatures after all.

Strauss

While Baur thus explained Christianity as a development by contrasts, Strauss and his successor, Schmiedel, found its origins in the land of myth. In his *Leben Jesu* the former has proved, to his own satisfaction, the mythical origin of the history of the miracles and resurrection of our Lord. He has endowed the evangelists and early Christian writers with wonderful imagination and power of invention, but he does not seem to be aware of this assumption, for he declares that they had everything mapped out for them. They knew exactly what the Messias was to be, and to do, and to suffer. The Old Testament prototypes—David, Daniel, Elijah, Moses, the Servant in Isaiah, and later Jewish conceptions of the "silent" age—afforded them abundant material from which they could draw and present a comparatively Christian character. These writers did their work of recording in good faith, as facts, things that had never occurred. They were justified by their "theological interest," and, after all, according to them a myth was merely an unhistorical narrative, in which a religious community recognises a constituent part of its foundation. They required a medium to express their doctrines of forgiveness, the true sacredness of the Sabbath, and

the belief that death is but a sleep—ideas that were now rising in the public consciousness. And the mythical Messiah of the Jews was the only form to hand in which they could express these Christian ideas, which were breathed as a new and better soul into narratives based upon the Old Testament and the Messianic hopes.

Common-sense be the judge which of these explanations be the more likely—that the Gospels were the simple records of a superhuman life, or that they were the result of a deliberate attempt of a whole community to compose and accept a narrative which they well knew had no foundation in fact, but which was required as a vehicle for their propaganda. Human imagination could hardly create so simple and so sublime a picture as that of the Christ of the Gospels. And we can scarcely believe that fraud would be successful where fancy would fail? In those mythical stories, the Apocryphal Gospels, which were invented for the purpose of glorifying the Master, we have specimens of what human imagination and theological "interest" have done for Jesus. From such a source we are safe in saying that the writers of the historical Jesus did not draw. For if this Jesus be but an artificial creation, it is the most miraculous thing the world has ever seen or known, that the crowning event in the history of the world should be in Renan's phrase, "the revolution by which the noblest portions of humanity passed from the ancient religions, comprised under the vague name of 'Paganism,' to a religion founded on the Divine Unity, the Trinity, and the Incarnation of the Son of God," and that that revolution should not have had its origin in an historical fact, much less in a divine Person.

Renan

In the opening sentences of his *Vie de Jésus*, Renan admits that the cause of this revolution was "a fact which took place in the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, when there lived a superior person, who, by his bold initiative, and the love he inspired in those around him, created the object and marked the point of departure of the future faith of humanity."

No writer, perhaps, shows a truer appreciation than Renan of the human character of the Master, His human-hearted love of nature ; His tenderly mysterious manner, that wins the woman's devotion ; His strongly sympathetic spirit, that compels the man's admiration ; and His sweet simplicity, that brings the little ones to His arms. No one saw better the significance and tendency of the Master's teaching or valued more the poetry of His soul, and yet no one was less in touch with His divine nature and mission. The visionary Jew, the gentle Messiah who earns divinity by His devotion to humanity, the amiable Reformer who founded the religion of the Father, when separated from the divine attributes He claimed, the divine nature He assumed, the divine powers He commanded, may be an attractive and idyllic figure, but He could not be the "ever-enduring principle of spiritual regeneration" that Mr. Lecky admits He has been. It is impossible to look upon Jesus as a purely human life, described in purely human records, as Hase and his school did. For as the cause must be equal to produce the effect, we cannot eliminate miracle and inspiration from the gospel and the Founder of our religion. In their efforts to reconcile the Christ of the Gospels with the requirements of history, men have

been content to look away from those Divine attributes and powers of Christ, which would have made it utterly impossible for them to treat Him as an ordinary man. It may be quite true, as Herder remarks, that it is inexcusable in us who have the moral evidences of Christianity around us to need such credentials as physical miracles, which were but emblems of a higher activity; but we cannot forget that the supernatural origin of the Founder is the only rational explanation that can be offered of the supernatural growth of His religion.

Harnack

In Harnack we have a modern writer of power and piety, who represents the Ritschlian school which asserts the independence of Christianity with regard to science and considers it impossible to have Christianity without Christ.[1] He treats the sacred subject of our Lord's personality with reserve and respect. He warns us not to seek to analyse His psychology. That is His secret; we cannot fathom it, and we dare not attempt to do so. In one sense He was the Messiah, and in another sense He was not; for He left that idea far behind Him and filled it with a new content that burst it—an idea, however, that cannot be altogether incomprehensible, seeing that it had given to a nation the ideals of centuries of its life. But He knew Himself to be the Son of God, and that He had the Father's work to do. He had already determined that matter in His mind before He was baptized. But the rôle

[1] The school of Ritschl owes much to the work of Schleiermacher and his position that it is impossible to separate Christ from Christianity.

He had to play, the suffering and the Cross,—these things were gradually revealed to His soul as He became aware of the prophecies He was to fulfil. But beyond this Harnack does not attempt to carry us, for the personality of Christ, according to him, has no place in the gospel, which merely concerns the soul and God. "The Evangel has no Christology, but it has the mercy and love of the Father; it holds forth a choice between God and Mammon, Truth and Falsehood, *and to it belongs, not the Son, but the Father only.* To the Father the Son leads us. Thousands find the Father in Him, who is the way to the Father, not only by reason of His word, but even more by reason of what He is, and does, and suffers. The Parable of the Sower contains no dogma; it states a fact. The blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, and the poor have the gospel preached to them—through Him. In this experience His majesty, which the Father had given Him, shone forth in His hours of trial and combat; and His personal work, being consummated by His death, will remain a fact decisive and effectual for the future. 'He is the way to the Father.' Has He made a mistake? Nay, He has been justified by history. He is not a constituent part of the gospel; He is the personal realisation of His gospel and the power of the gospel, and is ever felt to be so. For the experience and knowledge to which He has led men has been the subject of their message, and that message is a living one."[1] These are beautiful words, to be surpassed even in the next chapter, where the death and resurrection of Christ are treated, not however in the orthodox fashion. We are, therefore, hardly prepared for the remark that "the true doctrine

[1] *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, pp. 90, 91.

of Christ threatens to become the centre of the system, and to pervert the majesty and simplicity of the gospel."[1] "It was far from His purpose," he has already said (p. 80), "to give any doctrine of His person and His worth independently of the gospel"; and "He would have no other devotion to Himself or faith in His person than that which expressed itself in the keeping of His commandments." If that be true, why did our Lord reveal Himself under so many different types—Shepherd, Door, Vine, Bread of Life, Light, and Life—that express nothing if not a personal relation, and introduce them with such emphasis—"I am"? If the doctrine of the divine personality and two natures of Christ was indeed, as Harnack would show, the discovery of a later age, it was not an invention. It was not due to the identification of the Greek *Logos* with Christ. That identification may, indeed, have given a metaphysical meaning to His nature (p. 128), but it did not create His Church's belief in His divinity and in His oneness with His Father. The Jewish enemies of Jesus knew the claim He made, and crucified Him for what they called His blasphemy. His disciples were equally conscious of that claim, and sealed their faith by dying to maintain it. In the very first statement of their faith—the baptismal formula—they had linked His name with those of the Father and the Holy Spirit. It is true that metaphysical definitions of the personality and nature of Jesus profit little if truth and righteousness and brotherly love be forgotten; but who will dare to say that the simplicity and power of the gospel are lessened when read in the light of His personality, who, though He was the Son of God, became the Son

[1] *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, p. 115.

of Man to make the sons of men sons of God? Hess may have dwelt truthfully upon the incomparable grace of His life and the singular appropriateness of the Gospel scenes; Herder may have lingered exclusively over the moral elevation of His character and teaching; Schleiermacher may have tried to reconcile faith and reason in the natural development of His consciousness of God; Neander may have sought a *modus vivendi* between inspiration and natural gifts; Mill may have found consolation in the ideal goodness of His personality; Renan may have sympathetically depicted the historical and psychological growth of His mind and heart; and Harnack may have, in powerful and vivid phrase, depicted the course and consummation of His consciousness as Son of God and Messiah of the Jews: but the Lord of the Christian Church is not the personified ideal of the German rationalists, nor the romantic hero of the French humanitarian, nor the visionary Jesus of the Docetæ, nor the human Messiah of the Ebionites, nor the semi-divine creature of the Arians, but He is the "strong Son of God."

How these German critics answer each other may be seen from Professor Harnack's remarks in his *Wesen des Christenthums*[1] on the mythical theory of Strauss. There he writes: "Strauss's contention that the Gospels contain a very great deal that is mythical has not been borne out," and "Sixty years ago David Friedrich Strauss thought that he had almost entirely destroyed the historical credibility, not only of the Fourth, but also of the first three Gospels as well. The historical criticism of two generations has succeeded in restoring that credibility in its main outlines," and "Criticism

[1] E. T., p. 23.

to-day universally acknowledges the unique character of the Gospels."

In connection with Professor Harnack's subjective synthesis of Christianity, it would be interesting to mention the Abbé Loisy's synthesis, which is an attempt to undermine the other. As Harnack presented Christianity as the subjective realisation of God through Christ apart from all system ; Loisy, on the other hand, regards Christianity as an objective matter to be identified with one system—the Roman. Harnack finds the essence of Christianity in faith, a sense of a living and entirely personal relation to God. Loisy, on the other hand, finds Christianity in a visible kingdom—an earthly theocracy, infallible and capable of infinite development. According to him the Incarnation and the Resurrection are posthumous developments of doctrine ; and the revelation of our Lord's divinity was not an actual part of our Saviour's historical teaching. While one writer emphasises the individuality, the other lays stress upon the social side of religion, but both eliminate from these records the principle of vitality that quickens the faith of the individual, and cements and fosters the life of the society—the Spirit of the risen Christ. And yet it is but fair to quote the following inspiring words [1] of Professor Harnack on the empty tomb, which Loisy regards as " only an indirect argument." " This grave was the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished, that there is a life eternal. It is useless to cite Plato ; it is useless to point to the Persian religion, and the ideas and literature of later Judaism. All that would have perished and has perished ; but the certainty of the resurrection and of a life eternal

[1] *What is Christianity ?* p. 162.

which is bound up with the grave in Joseph's garden has not perished, and on the conviction that Jesus lives we still base those hopes of citizenship in an Eternal City which make our earthly life worth living and tolerable." But while the French Abbé will not allow his reason to accept the scriptural proof of the resurrection and the divinity of our Lord, which he declares is "a dogma that has grown in the Christian conscience but which has never been expressly formulated in the gospel,"[1] his reason assents to these doctrines when put forward on the authority of "the infallibility of the Church."[2] But members of the British Churches do not accept these truths on the authority of Church Councils, but because they are in agreement with the inspired revelation, because they have the common consent of Christendom, and because they are the only explanations of a supernatural life and an immortal influence. And we believe in Christ as the revelation of the Father, not because of the miracles He wrought, but because of the miracle He was. It was to His personality that Jesus appealed. "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me; or else believe Me for the very work's sake." It was to Himself that He wished to draw the men of His own and every age. For Christ is Christianity. And the influence of that personality upon the men of His day is unparalleled in history. For where else do we find men living in social and everyday intercourse with another man, and then declaring Him not merely a messenger of God but the Word of God, who was with God and was God, who became flesh, and who ascended to His Father?

[1] *Autour d'un petit livre*, p. 117. [2] *Le Qu. Evang.*, p. 756.

It is the self-evidencing character of the Master that is the main proof of His divinity. This moral proof of Christ grows stronger every day, while the miraculous evidence of Christianity impresses less as its chain grows longer. We, however, may judge of the institution by its works and its power, but we find that the real power of the institution lies, in the last resort, in Him who founded it. Comparison with other religions has proved that Christianity has in the Person of its Founder a peace and power, a permanence and hope that no ethnic religion can give. An historical retrospect of the unparalleled "Gesta Christi" or works of Christ during the past nineteen centuries points to the miraculous nature of His influence, the singular power of His personality, and the unprecedented historical facts of His life. He claimed to be the Light of the world, and He is still the one source of spiritual light to all the progressive nations of the world. From Him have sprung all efforts for the raising of man and improvement of the down-trodden and outcast. By His influence slavery has been abolished, the horrors of war mitigated, the lot of the poor ameliorated, the liberty of woman asserted. By Him the whole tone of life—domestic, social and political—has been purified ; morals have been refined, the arts inspired, the sciences encouraged. By His life of self-sacrifice mankind has been lifted up to God. There have been great and good men, but their greatness and goodness pale in the presence of Him whose "ideal character through the changes of eighteeen centuries has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love." Which of them has exerted an appreciable influence for centuries after his death ? Free from all the peculiarities of His race, free from

all the frailties of man, the one Catholic Man, the one perfect Man still speaks as man to the very heart of man, still draws us with cords of love, still cheers us in our sorrows, and shields us in our temptations. We cannot but believe that He was more than a son of man, who cannot, as other men, be explained as a product of the past, and whose power is a present and eternal reality.

Such antagonists, however, as we have reviewed are not to be despised. They do not, indeed, make due allowance for the abiding influence and spiritual miracle of the ever present Christ, but they point out our best line of defence. For if Jesus is the Light of the world, the world must be able to see that light, and if He is truly the Son of God, His work and doctrine must be absolutely unparalleled in history, and must possess a breadth and intensity unknown to any son of man, and His character must be instinct with divine beauty and holiness. If such qualifications are found in Him, and if He stands on an eminence inaccessible to other men, on a solitary pedestal for all time and for all men, He must represent something more than the zenith of human life, the climax of human achievement. And if His power is still felt; if His presence still inspires and His person still attracts multitudes of men and women, and especially those who are anxious to be freed from evil influences, to break with an evil past and live a holy, pure life; if it is true that the record of His brief mission to man has "done more to soften and regenerate humanity than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists"; if Jesus Christ possesses in His life and person a divinely attractive power by which He is still able to raise all men to God and

to draw all men unto Himself, can we believe that He was only a man like other men, or at most possessing somewhat more of the Divine Spirit than other men, all of whom are to be regarded, according to certain writers, as incarnations of the Divine? In that case, He would have the highest place in the Pantheon of humanity, with Shakespeare and Socrates not far off. But in what way is the influence of the greatest and wisest men to be compared with the power of that wonderful personality? They may win the admiration of our intellect and even our highest moral commendation. But is this all that Christ has won? Has He not taken entire possession of men? Has He not lifted them into a new sphere of life? Does He not dominate their spiritual nature with a force and constancy that nothing natural can explain? Does He not give the unhappy comfort, the sinner forgiveness, the penitent absolution, the despairing hope? Are these evidences, subjective and personal, but real and continuous, of the power of Christ to be regarded as results of vision, poetry, or hallucination? Then all Christians, indeed, are mad—incurably mad.

Again, what other system of philosophy or form of religion has ever won a number of adherents to go about "redressing human wrongs," sacrificing self and bearing hardship, contented to know that they are following in the blessed footsteps of His most holy life? Are all these deluded and insane, even when there is no trace of hysteria observable in their method and mission? One of the wisest of wise men once said, "We must wait until some one can find out how we ought to behave towards God and towards our fellow-man." "Ah, Socrates," was the sad reply,

" but when will that time come and who is he that will teach us ? For sweeter than life itself were it to see and know such a one."

But what would be the Christian's answer ? Would he not say that such a man has come already to the shores of this land of shadows, and revealed to man, the Father, His love, His will and His power, lifting up the great heart of man with a strange joy and peace, comforting the sad and strengthening the feeble sons of men ? And might he not claim, with pardonable pride, that everything that is good and excellent in the world is hallowed and inspired by Christ—religion, civilisation, and the arts and the sciences ? And might he not likewise ask, what influence have the religions of socialism, humanity, and pantheism, based as they are on a false sentiment and imperfect revelation, in raising the tone and principles of mankind in comparison with that which is said to be founded on the " visions " of the followers of the Christ ? Must we not refer this mighty influence to a higher sphere than the human ? Must we not admit that His personality was a moral miracle whose influence and doctrine suggest a preternatural origin and source, whose incarnation is only surpassed in wonder by that miracle of His life of self-sacrifice, and whose example of virtue is only paralleled by His inspiration to goodness ? His unique and transcendent personality, standing on an eminence that no son of man can approach unto, is to us a revelation of the Divine. His solitary pre-eminence must have a solitary cause. And it is to this moral ascendancy that He appeals, and it is in this spiritual supremacy that His Church has found a never-dying principle of spiritual regeneration. In contrast with this position

that the Christ holds in His Church compare the position the founders of Mahometanism and Buddhism hold in their respective religions, in which they are reduced to negligible factors.

If they who doubt the miracles that are connected with His life in the consciousness of Christianity would seek to know Him and serve Him, they too shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. And the miracles of the Incarnation and the Resurrection will pale into insignificance before that increasingly manifest miracle of His Eternal Presence and Inspiration. For to know the Christ is to carry Him in our heart. But to know Him thoroughly we must need Him truly. "Evidence of Christianity!" exclaimed Coleridge. "I am weary of the word. Make a man feel his want of it; rouse him, if you can, to a sense of his need of it, and you may safely trust to its own evidences, remembering the saying of our Lord that 'No man cometh unto Me except the Father draw him.'"

Are we not entitled to demand of those who declare He was but human after all, to prove that He was so, and to challenge them without the aid of such questionable theories as legend, tendency, vision, and hypnotic power, to explain the uniqueness of His personality, the triumph of His Cross, the marvellous perfection of His character and revelation, and the fact that those who knew Him and had seen Him face to face proclaimed Him to be the beginning of a new order and the source of a new life? Is our Christianity, then, a myth? There are, indeed, myths connected with modern presentations of it—the "tendency," "visions," and "legend" of the rational school of critics. For the best writers and thinkers of our day,

men of the stamp of Carlyle and Lecky, admit that the Christ of the Gospels is a sublime personality, and the Gospels, in the main, are a true presentation of that personality.

In this chapter no reference has been made to the compilation, *Jesus or Christ?* in which recent Modernist views are expressed, as these are but a recrudescence of the various German opinions discussed, which in so far as they are hostile and heterodox proceed from the assumptions that man is the judge of God, and that the Divine methods of incarnation and atonement must first be submitted to and approved by human expert opinion before they can be accepted by man's reason or effectual in his spiritual life. It were well for the human reason to acknowledge that a personality who transcends human experience cannot be brought into line with it or made subject to its laws.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PORTRAITS OF JESUS

IT is with extreme diffidence that the writer of these pages ventures to draw a portrait of the Christ. Where so many have failed he has poor chance of success. But the effort to help others to study that Portrait, as it is presented in the immortal pages of the Gospels, and to follow the lines of those wonderful limners, if not its own commendation is at least its own reward. And if that Central Figure can be made more vivid and real to one soul, who will say that the work has been a failure ?

There are many things concerning our Lord that we would fain know, such as, His appearance—what manner of man He was ; and His speech—whether He spoke Aramaic or Greek. But on these points we must confess our ignorance. It is not improbable, however, that He spoke the vernacular Aramaic when addressing people who were more familiar with that language, and used the provincial Greek when speaking to those who were better acquainted with that tongue. Professor Dalman (*Worte Jesu*, p. 16) says that " Jesus taught in Aramaic." That He did speak Aramaic several expressions—*Talitha cumi, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, Boanerges*, etc.—prove. But it is not likely that He would have failed in His quiet home of Nazareth to master a language familiar to most of the strangers

of Palestine. And that He did speak Greek His conversations with Pilate and the Greek strangers would lead us to suppose. The fact that the Gospels are in Greek and that St. Paul wrote in Greek do not, however, conclusively prove that Jesus spoke Greek. For it is apparent that certain portions of the Gospels, such as the hymns in St. Luke, if not originally written in Aramaic, are expressed in Aramaic idiom. But the Gospel of St. John cannot be a translation. It shows too deep a knowledge of the niceties of Greek expression.

Of our Lord's personal appearance no reliable account has reached us, and no ancient picture or statue has been preserved. Tradition, however, has drawn upon its ever ready material, imagination, and conjured up portraits of the Christ. One of these portraits is found in the Church history of Nicephorus, of the eighth century, where that author, quoting from an earlier writer, John of Damascus, of the sixth century, says that Jesus resembled His Mother, was beautiful and tall, with fair and slightly curling locks, with dark eyebrows, pale oval face, bright eyes, and a look expressive of patience, nobility, and wisdom, and slightly stooped. Another portrait is given in the remarkable letter from Lentulus to the Roman Senate, which, however, is not earlier than the twelfth century, and is evidently based upon the description of David. In it we read: "There has appeared in our times a man of great virtue, called Christ Jesus. He is of lofty stature and beautiful, with a countenance of nobility that inspires both love and fear. His hair is wavy, slightly crisp, of the colour of wine, gleaming as it falls upon His shoulders, and parted in the middle after the manner of the Nazarenes. His brow is pure and

even, and his face without spot or wrinkle, but delicately flushed. His nose and mouth are faultless. He has a full beard of the same ruddy colour as His hair, not long but pointed. His eyes are blue and bright. He is terrible in rebuke, gentle and loving in admonition, cheerful but grave. He has never been seen to laugh but often to weep. He is tall and straight, and His hands and limbs are beautiful to behold. In speech He is grave, reserved and modest, and He is fair among the children of men."

Such are two of the most pleasing portraits of the Christ which tradition has handed down to us. What real foundation there is for them, beyond the love and veneration of the Saviour and the not unnatural inference that He whose life was so beautiful must have been comely to behold, we cannot say. On the other hand, there was a very different tradition in the early Church, based upon the description in Isaiah lii. 14 and liii. 2, of the Servant: "As many were astonied at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men. . . . He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him," that His bodily appearance was insignificant and even contemptible. Clement of Alexandria says: "His beauty was in His soul and His actions, but His personal appearance was poor." Justin Martyr describes Him as being "without beauty, glory, or honour" (ἄτιμος καὶ ἀειδής, Dial. 14). "His body," according to Origen, "was small and ill-made and common"; and, according to Tertullian, "had no human beauty, much less heavenly glory." The heathen Celsus made this traditional view of our Lord an objection to His

divinity. Others went further still and declared that He was a leper, an idea that doubtless had its origin in the peculiar reading of the Vulgate of Isaiah liii. 4, "Nos putavimus eum quasi leprosum—we thought Him a leper." But this was hardly probable or possible in the case of One who drew many men after Him.

We cannot say whether this view of our Lord's bodily appearance was due to a reaction from the Greek worship of physical beauty and a desire to exalt the beauty of His spirit. We certainly feel that it is an unnatural and untrue description of Him upon whose brow the glory of heaven shone, and we heartily sympathise with the more popular view, advocated by Jerome and Augustine, that He was, like His ancestor, David, "fairer than the children of men." There must have been something ineffably pure and beautiful in His expression; something unspeakably attractive in His look and voice; some uncommon grace and winsomeness, if not beauty and comeliness, in His face; some traces of natural dignity and thoughtfulness in His attitude; otherwise His personal appearance might have hindered the success of His spiritual work.

It seems strange that no pictures or statues of Jesus have survived from ancient times, although there are many preserved in the Missals of the Middle Ages, of all kinds, some hideous and others passing beautiful. The Gnostics seem to have been the first who attempted to make representations of the Christ, as Irenæus says (I. xxv.): "They have some painted likenesses, and some made of other material, and they say that the figure of Christ was modelled by Pilate at the time when Jesus was with them. And they crown

these and place them with the images of the philosophers of the world, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and the rest, and they pay all these the respect the Gentiles do."

There is a tradition that Nicodemus, after he had taken our Lord down from the Cross, formed with his own hands an image of the Crucified and gave it to Gamaliel, and that it was preserved in the city of Berytus until the Jews proceeded to insult it, when it was destroyed, after which many wonderful things happened. The supposed impression of Jesus on the napkin of Veronica has a duplicate in the tradition that Abgarus of Edessa, when he could not prevail upon Jesus to come to him, sent a notable artist to paint His likeness; but when the artist was unable, owing to the brilliancy of the Saviour's countenance, to execute his order, the Saviour took a linen cloth and sent an impression of His face upon it to the king. It is said that a statue of the Christ was found in the lararium of the Emperor Alexander Severus.

The most famous statue is that described by Eusebius (*H.E.*, vii. 18). It is said to have been at Cæsarea Philippi and to represent the healing of the woman who had the issue of blood. The historian, in his description, says that there stood on a high pedestal of rock, at the gate of the woman's house, a bronze statue of the woman on bended knee, with upstretched hand, like unto a suppliant, and before her, also in bronze, stood the erect figure of a man, gracefully robed in the double cloak affected by the Stoic philosophers, with His hand extended to the woman, and at His feet a strange kind of grass reaching up to the hem of His garment, a sort of antidote for all diseases. Sozomen tells us that the Emperor

Julian destroyed this statue. Indeed, the whole subject is wrapped in mystery.

It seems clear that it was against the mind of the early Church to encourage statues and pictures of Christ, of whom, however, the symbols of Lamb and Fish are found in the Catacombs—lest the Christians might be tempted to worship the image and forget the Person. The picture which the Apocalypse gave to the Church, "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks One like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun that shineth in his strength"—seems to have left an indelible impression upon the memory of the Church and to have discouraged any attempt to trace the human features of His face. "Of what appearance He was we are utterly ignorant," writes Augustine. But it is natural and appropriate to think of Him as He has been represented by the grand Masters, with that exquisite expression of mingled sweetness and sorrow, "more beautiful than beauty's self"; in all the dignity of rule and with all the pathos of restraint.

The Christ of the Gospels

But it is the portrait of the Saviour's character and personality, as drawn by the four Evangelists, in which

His power over our hearts lies. As the late W. E. H. Lecky said, the Church possesses in the character and example of its Founder "a never dying principle of spiritual regeneration." The unveiling of that portrait has again and again induced the apparently dead flower of Christian faith to blossom anew with all its pristine loveliness; and has repeatedly caused the dying embers of Christian love to burst once more into flame. It is true of Christianity that

"Even in *its* ashes live *its* wonted fires";

and that a renewal of life follows every effort to realise the presence of Christ, and to see Jesus. And the only satisfactory solution of the fact has been given by the Lord Himself: "I came forth and am come from God, for neither have I come of Myself but He sent Me."

And yet modern unbelief has dared to assail this fact. The Christ of the Gospels, it is alleged, is an ideal creation, very different from the Man Jesus, who was a great man like other great men, but who was fortunate enough to have around Him a band of credulous enthusiasts who "invested his character with a halo of superhuman glory." The portrait of Christ is found in the Gospels' four different narratives. There we have a delineation of the same character, from four different points of view, and from four different pens, which appear to harmonise in the main lines. This fact admits of the one explanation, that their subject was an historical reality. Now we are asked to believe that these narratives consist of legends and stories collected or invented by the Evangelists or those who represented them. We are authoritatively informed that the most perfectly drawn character in

literature owes its creation to such incongruous and questionable elements. This theory fails to give an account of the portrait and consequently fails to explain the origin of those narratives of which that portrait is the conjoint result. Now we have a portrait of Christ, due to such materials as our Gospels are said to be, in the Christ of the spurious Gospels, which are a collection of fictions and legends. In these the character of Jesus is not depicted in very attractive colours. He is petty and spiteful. His miracles are caricatures of power, and His actions are wantonly mischievous. Such is the kind of Christ the legendary spirit has created for us. Whereas the Christ of the Gospels is arrayed in all the beauty of holiness, displays a superhuman wisdom, and His every action is stamped with a high moral impress. It was not possible, surely, for untrained men to invent a character who stood so far above their conceptions of moral goodness ; a character allowed by the majority of the unbelievers to be the noblest and purest that has ever existed in fact or been drawn in fiction—a character, too, that is clearly no artificial creation such as the confessedly artificial ones of poets and novelists, but one that was drawn artlessly from the living model, with but little comment, by simple men, who could never have dreamt that their joint efforts would give to the world the most perfect and complete of all types of character —the Christ of the Gospels. It seems impossible that any three or four writers could attempt to describe such a character, and succeed in producing a work that presents so prevailing a unity, unless they drew from the living model.

The difficulties of their task were colossal. They had to embody in one and the same character the

human and the divine; they had to describe One who combined gentleness with severity, the most perfect humility with the highest sense of power, the greatness of a God with the weakness of a man; One who submitted to trial, agony, and death for what the men of His day would consider a chimerical idea—the salvation of the world; and One who was actually believed to be the Saviour of the world. They had to portray a Teacher whose aim was not merely to indulge in theory and speculation but to win men to obey the moral law; who was not satisfied to reach the head but must also touch the heart; who based His moral precepts on the truths of religion by founding the brotherhood and mutual obligation of man, not on expediency[1] or law,[2] not on pleasure[3] or knowledge,[4] but on the Fatherhood of God; who made no attempt to legislate for any individual state, real or imaginary, but who succeeded in founding a religion adapted to the needs of all men, not limited to a few and not confined to the letter, both Catholic and Evangelical; whose mission was to institute a society for the regeneration of all classes and every successive generation, not merely to found a school for study or a sect for philosophy; who came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance, and who has succeeded in saving a multitude that no man can number from lives of sin and selfishness; and who introduced a new spiritual power into the world by revealing to man how he ought to behave towards God and towards his fellow-man, and by giving to man the example of a life which is the most perfect embodiment of all that is good and lovely.

Such is the character they had to portray. Add,

[1] Mill. [2] The Jewish School. [3] Epicurus. [4] Zeno.

moreover, to the difficulties of this already highly complicated work the Jewish sentiment, colouring, and tone which pervade the whole story, its historical environment and real frame. Is it possible that a work which exhibits such a marvellous unity of conception amid such a variety of detail could have been produced by chance? Is it credible that such a masterpiece of art owes its origin to a blending of fiction with fact, or an attempt to satisfy the preconceived notions of the Jews? Common sense scorns the idea, and demands what is gained thereby? Nay, rather, how much would be lost? It would mean that the one power that has worked for good during the past nineteen centuries has been based on an illusion, that the inspiring thought of religious, social, and political reform is a nebular hypothesis, and that self-sacrifice is a vanity. For to tear the mantle of majesty from the Saviour's shoulder is to cut away the foundations of all social and religious improvement, to throw away the principles of love and mercy and progress, and to identify the only power that has succeeded in raising men's lives and winning their hearts with a fraud. This, in the eyes of Christians, is to take away from life all that makes it worth living, all that ennobles and sanctifies, inspires and consoles; and to reduce it to the level of a disordered dream, devoid of reality, connection and satisfaction.

A Fourfold Portrait

But if we really desire to accept the Gospels of Christ and to believe in His divinity and humanity, we must "come and see" for ourselves. "Out of

Nazareth can there come any good thing ? " demanded an Israelite " in whom there was no guile." " Come and see," said another. And when he came and saw he cried, " Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel." To those who do not believe in the revelation or divinity we say, " Come and see. Come for yourselves and see Jesus, hear His words and feel His power, and then you will be assuredly convinced in your own mind that He was the Son of God and the King of Israel."

Let us come and see Him, putting away from our minds all that we have been taught about Him, and listening to Him as if it were for the first time in our lives. What do we see ? A Man who never had a peer, a Man who exercised a superhuman influence upon all the people He touched and reached, a Man whose power and name are still the greatest things in the world. He made the highest claim that ever can be made upon the reason and faith of men. For He claimed to be without sin and to be one with the Father, and what is more surprising He was believed. Standing before us, He challenges us in those memorable words, " Which of you convinceth Me of sin ? " Many have tried to discover flaws and detect shortcomings in that wonderful character. But they cannot be said to be successful. They say He showed signs of petulance, anger, and unkindness to His Mother and the Pharisees, but they can convince no person of any intelligence that Jesus was an imperfect man. For it is only by wresting words from their right sense, and by putting a forced and unnatural interpretation upon His deeds, that they can give any colour to their charges. They first

denude Him of all divinity and power, and then declare that in this Christ they have One who was the outcome of the age in which He lived, or a genius who played so successfully upon the hopes of the people that they took Him to be a prophet. They approach their sacred subject with certain presuppositions and prejudices, and they analyse His personality in the light of the assumption that no one who knew or spoke with Jesus could give Him divine honours. And when this *a priori* argument is fully answered by the argument *a posteriori* of Christian experience, they seek to support their case by an unpardonable criticism of that spotless character which J. S. Mill regarded as the best translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete.

Look again at the picture before us—a truly singular portrait presented to us from four different points of view, and in four different positions, by four different artists, and yet the portrait in all four panels is of the same original. The first is the picture of an immortal Teacher seated on the sunlit summit of the Mountain of the Beatitudes, and pointing a host of men upwards to the Father's love and the Father's providence. His brows seem crowned with the splendour of royalty, and the light of prophecy gleams in His eyes as He contemplates the vision of the Kingdom of Heaven and speaks of its coming to men. Such is the picture of the King of the Jews, a King who was divinely born, who was divinely good, and who spake divinely. This is by the hand of St. Matthew. Vainly do we scan that portrait for the smallest sign of weakness, for the least appearance of wrong. Whatever imperfection there may be in it is due to the fact that the materials were inadequate

for the work, and the artist was unable to cope with the task before him.

Turn to another picture. This is by the Evangelist, St. Mark. The mothers are bringing their children to the Saviour. The disciples stand around Him as He is seated in the midst with a child in His arms. It is the portrait of a Man whose brows are furrowed deep with lines of sympathy, who looks down in a benign, protecting way upon the little ones He holds in His arms. It is the perfect humanity of His attitude that reaches our hearts. Such a Man, we would say, lives for others and will die for men. He is One from whose brow a lightning flash of anger would fall upon injustice or cruelty or hypocrisy. And in that impression of His humanity, exposed as it has been to the fierce light of nineteen centuries, there is no trace of moral defect, no stain to mar the attitude of a perfect character. Again the artist was hampered by his own deficiencies, in his delineation of a divine Person who took our humanity upon Him ; of a God humanified. But as we look intently on that furrowed face, on that pitying brow, we feel we are in the presence of One who became a child to save our childhood, and a man to save our manhood. A flood of divine light emanates from Him, consecrating and sanctifying, redeeming and saving all that come within His reach. To paint such a picture—the picture of One who was intensely human and supremely divine—was surely beyond the unaided power of man. It was a pen assisted and guided by the Spirit of God that sketched that immortal picture of the strong Son of God upon the Gospel canvas.

Look again. We are now standing before the

work of St. Luke. It is the picture of a Man bending over the almost lifeless body of a fellow-creature, supporting it in His arms as He stanches the bleeding wounds. There is compassionate, self-sacrificing love on that face that leans towards the fallen man. There is succour and strength in those hands that touch the wounds with healing power and raise that bruised and broken body. That is a picture never to be forgotten. Under it we read a motto in letters of gold, "Go and do thou likewise," which recalls the oft-repeated invitation, "Follow Me." But as we stand and gaze upon the panel and its subject we cannot but remark that the painter, St. Luke, the beloved physician, had special qualifications for his task. For it is the picture of the Great Physician that stands before us; the picture of One who delighted to show mercy upon the poor, the humble, and the down-trodden; the picture of One who gave the despised Samaritan, the sinful woman, the unhappy leper, and the dying robber balm for their bleeding wounds, rescuing them from sin, redeeming them from the curse of disease, and raising them to a life of holiness and love.

Millions have gazed upon those features of divine compassion, that expression of sublime sympathy. Multitudes have been drawn to the feet of Him who had pity and pardon for all. This record is, after all, but a human effort, the work of a man diligent in his labour, devoted to his task, and who was withal divinely guided to select the colours and trace the lines of his portrait. Why do we think so? Because there gleams upon that head a halo of divine grace; there rests upon that brow a charm that nothing human can withstand, and nothing human did create.

It was as the gracious Saviour that St. Luke loved to describe his Lord. His favourite themes are the grace and the salvation that descended upon our humanity through Jesus Christ.

Another picture still remains. Come and see it, and you will say with Nathanael, "It is the Son of God; it is the King of Israel." It is the figure of a shepherd, standing on a lofty mountain, and gazing down upon a valley of dry bones that lie scattered among the ruins beneath. There is little remarkable about that solitary figure at first sight. But as we look more closely we notice at once the abundant energy, the vigorous life that emanates from Him in contrast with the lifeless figures below. They are the dead and He is the life. Time which has wrought so vast a change in the once bright and buoyant multitude that moved in that valley has had no power over Him. They belong to every age of man. He seems to belong to none. Eternity is His. For "in the beginning was the Word."

Look again. There is something supremely spiritual about Him. He is not of the earth, earthy, like the relics of time beneath Him. A divine light radiates from Him; for He is the light of men. Above His head the very heaven seems to open, and multitudes of ethereal creatures, strange mystical forms, hover round and above Him, ready to perform His every wish.

A Being of another world, we say, and rightly. For we are now gazing upon the glory, the glory of the Only-Begotten of the Father. And yet we see how human He is. For He is the Word become flesh. But through the veil of His manhood we seem to see the spiritual power and form of a God, One who

can win men by His love, One who can inspire men by His touch. Such is St. John's portrait of the Good Shepherd standing above the ruins of time, waiting to pronounce the Resurrection words — "Come, Holy Spirit, from the four quarters of the heaven and fill these that are dead with the life that is spiritual and divine, and that passeth not away."

The eagle vision of St. John, the Apostle of Love, soared to the higher levels on which his Master moved, and there the spirit of the apostle recognised the divinity of His Master. There he knew Him to be God. And as the eagle that soars so high ever seems to spurn the ground, the apostle seldom touches anything mundane in His Master's life, but he straightway wings his flight to loftier regions of thought, sublimer realms of existence. He saw Him as the sinless One, the Man alone of all the men who ever lived upon whose soul no shadow of sin did fall. He records His challenge, a challenge that is to every age of man, and which anyone who is bold enough may take up if he dare—"Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"

He saw in Him the pre-existent One, "the I Am that I Am," the Word of God incarnate, the Jehovah who manifested Himself as the Son of Man. Of all the disciples who walked with Jesus of Nazareth, John was most attracted by Him, loved Him most and was most beloved. He understood best of all His divine character; He felt most of all His human heart. And if we desire to comprehend the breadth and length and depth of His divine nature and His love, we should study that Gospel which is the work of one who lived in the very atmosphere of a God, and

to whom his Master was the very light and life of his soul.

We have now gazed upon four pictures of our Lord and Master. We have seen the picture of the Teacher at whose feet are kneeling vast multitudes of men and women listening to His gracious words, and striving to carry out His immortal precepts. We have looked upon the sympathetic, yearning face of the Lover of little children, the Saviour of men. We have caught a glimpse of a countenance of divine compassion, and heard words of comfort and consolation to the dreary and the dying, the victims of disease, the slaves of sin. And we have been permitted to see behind the veil of time into the great beyond, and to our gaze of devotion the Son of Man appears the Son of God, the Good Shepherd who gave and gives eternal life to His people.

We have been greatly moved; our hearts have burned within us as we beheld Him, the Word of God who became flesh for us, the Man of Sorrows who died for us, the gentle Saviour who pardons us, the gracious Shepherd who loves and cares for us. Are we not inspired to exclaim, when we see Him in all His glory, in all His pity, in all His power and in all His love, "The Son of God, the King of Israel"?

Do we still doubt? Do we still hesitate to acknowledge His claim? Then we must accept His challenge, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" or, like St. Thomas, demand from Him a practical proof of His resurrection, and then He will reveal Himself to our souls. He will make us ashamed of having tested One we ought to have trusted, and in humility and fervour we shall exclaim, "My Lord and my God!"

If we keep these pictures of Jesus ever before the eyes of our soul, if we live in them and meditate upon them, by degrees our features will acquire something of the expression of the Master, and our life will be a reflection of His divine sweetness and grace.

CHAPTER IX

OUR LORD'S DIVINE AND HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

IF Jesus was the pre-existent Word of God, what of the consciousness of that state? Did He sacrifice it? or did He retain it absolutely or conditionally? This is one of the problems of the Incarnation that has most perplexed the mind of the Church and led to countless heresies on the subject of the divinity of our Lord. Some, in their efforts to arrive at a satisfactory explanation of the fact that our Lord spoke as a man limited in knowledge regarding the Last Day,[1] have put forth the theory that Jesus Christ, in emptying Himself of His glory,[2] divested Himself completely of every divine attribute, including omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. This theory is called *Kenosis*, from the word used by St. Paul. The word is found in some fragments in Gregory of Nazianzus and Cyril of Alexandria, and was originally employed to define the Incarnation by Cyril in his argument against Nestorius. As used by St. Paul it signified that human nature was saved not by man becoming God but by God becoming man; and it emphasised both the voluntary nature of that Divine

[1] "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of God, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark xiii. 32).

[2] (Phil. ii. 7): ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν, "emptied Himself," whence the term *Kenosis*, not "made Himself of no reputation" (A.V.).

condescension and the limitations imposed on Himself by the Incarnate Word, who "though He was rich became poor," though full of glory emptied Himself of His position of equality with God, and though the Only-Begotten of the Father, submitted to a real growth in human knowledge in a human sphere, and though originally in the form of God, humiliated Himself and took the form of a servant.

In their efforts to reconcile the divine origin and the human life of Jesus Christ, Nestorians, Eutychians, Humanitarians, Arians, and Docetæ have discovered their respective heresies. To some the clue appeared in a dual personality, to others in a single nature; to some in an inferior Divinity, to others in a superior Humanity; to some in a visionary Godhead, and to others in an unreal Manhood. It behoves one, therefore, to treat the subject, not only with all the reverence due to it, but also with all care lest any unbalanced or careless word should in the smallest degree seem either to detract from the divine personality of Jesus, or to diminish the extent of the sacrifice He made for man. The Scriptures have not defined the position with sufficient exactness to guard us from error. They give us the factors and leave us to reconcile them. The Father and the Son are one (John x. 30). The Word was with God and the Word was God (John i. 1). By the Son the worlds were made, who is the reflection of God's glory and the express image of His person, and supports all things by the word of His power (Heb. i. 3). And yet He cried out, "Why hast Thou abandoned Me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46); and "If it be possible, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done" (Matt. xxvi. 39), as if there were some limitations even in His intercourse

with His Father. And yet He prayed to the Father, "Glorify Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world existed." And yet St. Luke and the writer to the Hebrews speak of the intense reality of His temptations, of His growth in wisdom and favour with God and man, and of His learning obedience "from the things He suffered" (Luke ii. 40–52, and Hebrews iv. 15, v. 7, 8). It is the human life of the incarnate Christ that we have to reconcile with the divine life of the pre-existent Son. This is the task that lies before us; and it is well to state it at the outset; for to know what we have to do and to do it is not law only for artists but also for theologians.

According to the more extreme view of the *Kenosis*, put forward by Professor Godet, our Lord had been in possession of a divine omnipotence, but at His Incarnation entered upon a stage of existence in which He has to receive, to ask, and to obey. He had possessed divine omnipotence, but He then accepted a condition in which He was constantly to learn and often to remain in ignorance. He had been filling all things, sharing the Pleroma and omnipresence of God, but then He became limited to a local habitation and a fixed body. He had once enjoyed immutable holiness, but then He acquired the liberty of choice and the power to sin. He once loved with an infinite love, now His love grows; and He once knew Himself as the Son of God, but under the new conditions He allows that knowledge to be extinguished and retains alone His inalienable personality. This view may be true in one sense but it is wrong in another. It may describe truly the extent of the sacrifice, but it seems to detract from the divine personality of Jesus. That divine personality vanishes more or less when

the divine attributes are removed, and the Incarnate One is deprived of His divine honours when regarded altogether as human in nature. The Godhead was, indeed, veiled behind the humanity of Christ, but at the same time it tabernacled therein. He emptied Himself, but did He forget Himself? If He became a fallible man, what becomes of His claims to infallible authority? He speaks ever as One sure of Himself and His position, as One by whose judgment and verdict the world will be swayed and its religion inspired. He challenges the world to convict Him of sin. He displays a knowledge of the Father which surpasses that which is possible to man. He has an insight into human character and human events that is supernatural. To overlook the claims and to accentuate the limitations of the incarnate life would be to carry the *Kenosis* to an extremity where the gospel would be but a distant voice from the shores of the Sea of Galilee, and the Cross and Passion would be reduced to the level of an example.

In all His self-imposed limitations, self-chosen sacrifices, self-accepted temptations, Jesus Christ was the same Person as He was when, as Word of God, He created the worlds; the same Person but under different conditions. The Son of God was now, as Jesus Christ, adapting Himself to the conditions of human life. As Man His power and His knowledge were limited, but as God His power and His knowledge were infinite. How could such a thing be possible? We can only say that it became an actual fact. If we believe the Incarnation of Christ we must believe that God and Man is one Christ, just as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man. And the Church in her Creeds seems to consider every word

and deed and thought of the Master as the word and deed and thought of the Son of God, and at the same time to emphasise the reality of His Manhood.

However it is to be explained, the divine and the human seem blended into one harmonious whole in the life of Jesus of Nazareth and in the consciousness of the Son of Man. Such a harmony according to some philosophers is an utter impossibility. According to the Kantian school, the human mind can only know the finite, the things of everyday experience, and being thus essentially and practically divided from the infinite cannot soar into a higher sphere of thought without falling into paradoxes and absurdities. Between the human and the divine a great gulf would thus be fixed—a gulf that has been spanned, according to our faith, by One who was both human and divine —the Incarnate Son of God. Such a union of the finite and the infinite was a miracle, the greatest revelation speaks of, but one after which both the Greeks and Hindus had gropings and yearnings. Moreover, everyday experience shows us that the finite mind of man—the microcosm—is ever attacking subjects that lie beyond its ken in the bosom of the infinite God—freewill and immortality. If the finite is so marked off from the infinite, how is it that even the untutored mind dwells naturally and lingers lovingly over the things of infinity and eternity, and that it often regards the things of time *sub specie eternitatis*? It cannot be true that the Creator of the human reason intended to give it false impressions of its powers and the purposes of its existence, and to beguile it into antinomies and paralogisms when it advanced beyond the appearances of things and sought to reach the things themselves. God does not

delude His children with transcendental *Schein*, when He permits glimpses and intimations of their divine origin and future to illumine their workaday life and to cheer them in their earthly progress. In the universe —the macrocosm—the work of a Deity transcendent or above, and immanent or in creation, do we not see the infinite blending harmoniously with the finite ? The minutest details in the arrangement of the Cosmos are the result of that infinite Mind which alone can give objective reality to its ideas, and yet is not too exalted or aloof to consider the smallest particles. The finite and the infinite seem, accordingly, to be blended more or less in every thought of man and in every work of God.

To describe the human mind, however, as finite, as is the manner of those who say, " the finite mind can only know the finite," is to beg the question, to take as proved what is not and cannot be proved, but may be disproved. For the human mind, so far from being finite, is infinite in capacity and unlimited in range. Knowledge is not merely of things we see and hear and touch and smell. If we are born with a faculty for receiving knowledge through impressions, we are also endowed with the power of creating knowledge through ideas. The human mind goes forth to study nature, observe its phenomena, steal its secrets, analyse its component parts, and afterwards arrange it in a system. But the thinking that is set up in order to do this is a spiritual process, for which the stimulus may be given from without, but of which the method is conceived within. It is the way the mind has of looking through its spectacles, as it were through a spectroscope to which nature is presented in a series of dissolving views. Imagination then comes in to

apply the results gained to a larger—ay, to an unlimited—field, and so laws, a purely mental product, are formed within the brain. The mind has thus untold resources; it is not finite, save so far as it must view things in the light and limitations of space and time. But there are also ideas that belong essentially to the spirit and which may be the inexplicable but invaluable heritage of a previous existence—the ideas of God and immortality which cannot be derived from experience, and which cannot be evolved from the inner consciousness of man considered as temporal and finite. One cannot, however, describe these ideas adequately when restricted by the conditions of space and time, but they are there in our soul creating longings and yearnings, awakening far-off memories and distant hopes, that are so inwoven with the very fibre of our personality that they cannot be torn away without leaving us unnatural, hopeless, and loveless, a miserable wreck of a man. Never can we completely lose the sense of our immortality, the vision of God, or the feeling of our superiority to the things of sense. For true are the words of the poet, that—

> "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting
> And cometh from afar;
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home."

The spiritual and eternal nature of our soul is thus revealed and suggested to us by these dreams from the dim background of our existence. Would it be

an irreverence to say that, in a similar manner, the consciousness of His divine Sonship might have made itself felt in that human vehicle which it illuminated so far as was possible under the conditions of space and time, awakening divine echoes of the Song of Creation in the human heart of the Son of Man?

In the incarnation of the Son of God we may thus see the crowning union of the finite and the infinite, of the human and the divine. The divine attributes, being inherent in His inalienable personality, were still retained in and through the incarnate life of the "Word made flesh," but by a continual act of self-sacrifice on His part were not permitted to interfere with the conditions of His humanity, and so impair the entirety of His nature, while they furnish His human life with a background of love, knowledge, and authority that made His revelation supreme and His redemption effectual for all time and all men.

We cannot, indeed, say particularly on what principle that harmony was established. "Of both natures," writes Hooker, "there is (1) a co-operation often; (2) an association always; (3) but never any mutual participation whereby the qualities of the one are infused into the other." To be true to the hypostatic union or personality of Jesus, we must regard His every word and thought and action as the word and thought and action of the Son of God. To be true to His humanity, we must allow a real growth and action of the human will and knowledge; and to be true to His divinity, we must consider the divine consciousness as the background—quiescent but still there and ready to be called forth whenever needed—of His thoughts. Ever at the basis of His experience, ever at the source of His spiritual life, ever in the back-

ground of His reflections lay this divine consciousness of God the Son, the principle of His individuality, ready to be drawn upon. It is thus that men draw or do not draw upon the stores of their memory whenever they will. And if He did not use that knowledge or that power it was not because He could not but because He willed not to use it. The explanation that Irenæus gives of the apparent inconsistencies of the union of the divine and the human in Christ is that the Word remained quiescent during His humiliation. "For as He became man in order that He might be subject to temptation, so was He Word that He might be glorified; the Word remaining quiescent that He might be capable of being tried, humiliated, crucified, and put to death, but was present with His humanity in conquest, endurance, beneficence, resurrection, and assumption" (iii. 19. 3).

Such a view does not detract from the great self-sacrifice of Jesus involved in His incarnation and His submission to the limitations of human conditions of life and knowledge; and it is psychologically truer than that of Godet, who held that our Lord entered into a state of existence in which He was shorn of all His divine attributes — omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and immutable holiness — preserving only His divine personality intact. It is surely to be pointed out reverently and impressively that if, on the one hand, we detract from the divinity of our Lord and His work for us by exaggerating His self-emptying or *Kenosis*; on the other hand, to minimise the extent of that wonderful *Kenosis* is to belittle the self-sacrifice of Jesus, who not only renounced His former glory and autonomy, but became more and more the Minister of the Father and the Servant of man.

For by His incarnation the Son became more and more dependent on and determined by the will and knowledge of the Father. He spoke of His death, not in tones of uncertainty but of dependence. "And I, if so be that I be lifted up, shall draw all men unto Myself." For His career is completely determined by another's will. Again He said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do" —words that express not so much the limitation of His capacity as the devoted nature of His character. For the Son doeth nothing of His own self-determination; He is determined by the Father. The tone of self-surrender, self-dedication, and dependence on the Father that rings through the wonderful prayer of the Saviour, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel, administers a silent but strong rebuke to the arrogant presumption of self-righteous Christians, while His life of continual dependence on the Father and self-sacrifice for man, is in itself an inspiration and example more potent than all the sermons that have ever been written and delivered to save the souls of men from self and to teach them "to suffer and be strong."

With this thought of the background of a divine consciousness compare the solution suggested by Canon Sanday in *Ancient and Modern Christologies*, where he describes the subliminal consciousness as the seat of all divine indwelling in man, and says "the same or the corresponding subliminal consciousness is the proper seat or locus of the deity of the incarnate Christ" (p. 159). Professor Weinel also regards the unconscious as containing the key of modern Christological problems. *See* further Appendix.

CHAPTER X

THE BAPTIST'S EVIDENCE

THE Gospel of St. John is a difficult Gospel to approach. Its difficulty lies in its depth. There is not a word that a child might not understand. But the ideas conveyed by the words are not simple. They are strange, mystical, sublime. The writer describes the things and persons of eternity in the language of space and time, and in divine principles are laid the foundations of human life. Upon his vision gleams the glory of the Godhead and in his heart burns the rapture of divine love. He sees in Jesus not only the Messiah of the Jews but also the Only-Begotten, the peerless Son of God, of whose life, stretching backward and forward to unmeasured æons, the Incarnation was but an episode, one, however, that created a new and eternal relation between Him and the sons of men.

But though the mood of the Gospel be mystic, the process of its thought is logical. The Word is described in His eternal and mysterious relations. He is then presented in His beneficial relations to the creation of which He is the author, and of which His presence is life. And finally He is described in His blessed relation to the race of men, of which He is both light and life—moral, spiritual, and intellectual. But the Light shines in darkness. It is the darkness that

sets it off ; it is the darkness that encircles it, that will not receive but cannot quench it. The Light triumphs in the fact that it is not extinguished. Darkness is its foil, and in the temporary failure of Light to overcome that darkness lies the hope and promise of a new manifestation of the Light. Thus the need of a more remarkable and conspicuous revelation of the Light becomes apparent. From the high levels of absolute, eternal, incomprehensible being we now descend to the lower planes of human thought and existence.

The herald of the Light is sent from God to bear witness of the Light who as the true Light doth lighten every man that cometh into the world, and He who all the time was in the world, although the world was not aware of it, Word Creator and Word Illuminative, became an historical figure, rejected by the nation but received by individuals whom He made sons of God and to whom He gave the new birth. Here we have the reason and the result of the witness, and again we see partial victory in apparent failure.

" And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." The Incarnation becomes a fact. The event for which preparation has been made, towards which all things are tending, takes place. The actual manifestation of the God of history in history, of the Power in whom all exist, is made among existing things. Creation is explained in the incarnation of Him who created it ; and full of grace and truth He took up a temporary abode among men. And the unique Son revealed the glory He had from the Father to those who were eye-witnesses of that glory and testified to it. Such is the divine fact upon

which the Gospel is founded, even the appearance of the Word, and the evidence borne by the Baptist and the Apostles to His incarnate glory.

The Evangelist John has stated in his sublime way the reasons for the Incarnation. He sets forth in an equally sublime manner the tenor of the Baptist's testimony. Twice in the course of his argument the Evangelist refers to that testimony (i. 6 and 15). Such passages are interludes of human music in the divine anthem of the Word, necessary links in that great chain of reasoning that is gradually lowered from the heights of existence and light which no man can approach unto or describe, to the levels of human being and thought, until the Word Illuminative and the Word Creative stands recorded as an historical figure upon the stage of life. That evidence was expressed in a thrice-repeated paradox, "He that cometh after me has become before me, for He was before me" (i. 15), well calculated to arrest the attention of his hearers and to stimulate their curiosity concerning the Baptist's successor who was also his predecessor.

Once more the writer interrupts the thread of the narrative to reveal his own apprehension of the Christ and to explain why the successor is the predecessor. "For of the fulness of His mercy have we all received." There is no limit to His mercy. He is the source of unending blessing and truth to His people. To realise one grace is to receive another. For grace and truth came through Him who alone existed in the inner circle of divine love and life, even Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son who declared to man the vision of God.

The Baptist's testimony is resumed. He says to the Jews who inquired who he might be, "I am a

voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord." The self-suppression of this testimony is not the least remarkable feature of it. The individuality of the Baptist was merged in his mission. The missionary was identified with his message. Few men will suppress themselves so completely as to renounce all claims to being remembered by their fellows. It was this self-suppression of his former Master that led John the Evangelist to such complete obliteration of himself in the records of the time in which he played a prominent part. And the self-abnegation of the Forerunner suitably foreshadowed the self-sacrifice of the great Successor, whose whole life was one act of devoted and voluntary crucifixion of self and its claims. In words taken from the Hebrew text of Isaiah (xl. 3) the Baptist fitly summed up the history of himself and the nature of his appearance and work. He has come to prepare the way for another, to call the attention of men to the Way of Holiness, that is to lead men across the wild waste of unreclaimed and barren desert and to prepare the way for the coming of the real King. And when he was asked why he baptized if he was not the Christ—for baptism was a function associated with the Messiah—he declared that his office—baptism in water—was but preparatory to a higher baptism which should supersede his as the spiritual transcends the physical. But they could not understand that there was One among them, rising above them all in dignity and power, whose work would completely eclipse his and whose servant he was not worthy to be. Men were blind to the nature of Him who was to come and who had come. But the eyes of John had been miraculously opened.

Much of the history and hopes of the Baptist is revealed in that saying of his, "He who sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding on Him, this is He who baptizeth in the Holy Spirit." In the heart of that strange, wild figure, whose earnestness was always at white heat, was treasured up a charge consisting of a message and a promise, and as he did not fail to trumpet forth the one, he did not cease to brood upon the other. It was this promise that was his inspiration, that kept him from sinking. The hope of some day leading to His baptism One who was to confer upon the whole race of man the spiritual baptism that would purify the heart supported the bold preacher of righteousness in an age of worldliness.

One day as he stood on Jordan's bank, to baptize those who came to him, a Person approached him, in no way different from his fellows, except in the air of holy tranquillity that rested upon Him. And the herald of the spiritual kingdom in his rapt mood led the Stranger to the waters. And, as he raised Him, suddenly and gloriously the sun's rays fell full upon that tranquil face, and in a moment of ecstasy the Baptist witnesses the fulfilment of his hopes. That was the supreme hour of his life. It was as if the heavens opened and the Spirit descended calmly and rested permanently upon the Man before whom He stood. And his life wish had been accomplished. His mission had been fulfilled; the thing he was living for had come to pass. And a divine voice seemed to ring through his inner consciousness proclaiming the coronation and consecration of the King, in the words of the Hebrew Psalmist, "Thou art

My Son. This day have I begotten Thee." And the words of Isaiah (xlii. 2), "Behold My Servant whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him," may have come back to the memory of the prophet as he was permitted a momentary glimpse of the things behind the veil.

Making every allowance for his rapture, there was some indication, some sign by which he was apprised that a special endowment of the Divine Spirit was given to the Man he had baptized, and that the latter had awakened to the consciousness of His Messianic vocation, and he declared Him to be the Son of God, or, as some authorities read, "the chosen of God" (i. 34). The spirit of the Baptist is satisfied; and the day after, seeing Jesus pass by, he turned to his followers and said, with reference to the prophecy of his favourite Isaiah, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The next day he repeated that saying, and his disciples followed Jesus. In the meantime the Baptist continued his mission, and Jesus withdrew when it was known that His followers were more numerous than the Baptist's, not as abandoning the man who had borne such remarkable evidence to His divinity, but as loath to remind the Baptist that his sun had set. The Baptist was not, however, offended or wounded, but expressed himself in words of resignation. "This my joy has been fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."

Shortly after this the Baptist was cast into prison, and from his caged soul the vision of "the Lamb of God" fades away. It had helped him to rise above the Jewish aspirations of his time; but within his dark dungeon walls the light fades away and the golden hope passes from his grasp. He longs for

another revelation, a fresh assurance to fan into flame the dying embers of his faith. But when we contemplate John in the depths of his despair with condescending pity, let us remember that the same Baptist in the bright sunshine of health and freedom had soared to a greater height of belief, had borne a grander testimony, and had made a nobler renunciation than any of the disciples of Jesus during the earthly mission of their Master. And though the name of Jesus has increased, the name of him who prophesied such increase shall never decrease in the estimation of those who have learnt from him to place Christ before self.

CHAPTER XI

THE TEMPTED CHRIST

A MATTER difficult to reconcile with the divinity of our Lord is the record of His Temptation given by the Synoptists but not in St. John's Gospel. In that Gospel our Lord seems at times overwhelmingly conscious of a hostile power arrayed against Him and His, even "the prince of this world," "who cometh and hath nothing in Him," and "who hath been judged." But in the first and third Gospels we have the narrative of a Temptation in the wilderness to which St. Mark but briefly alludes. Some, like Origen, Schleiermacher and Calvin, who could not reconcile such temptation with the absolute power and sinlessness of the Master, regarded it as an allegory or vision, the symbolical representation of an inward struggle. Many orthodox commentators make the details more or less symbolical, and treat the Temptation as a profoundly significant parable. The question for us is, Does this interpretation detract from the reality of the conflict in which Christ conquered temptation that the Christian might not be conquered by temptation? Any desire to evade the Temptation as inconsistent with the absolute sinlessness of Jesus is based on a wrong conception of sin. Man may often feel the sting of temptation, but he has not sinned unless his will has consented thereto and taken it into

his life. Then the desire conceives and bringeth forth sin. Therefore, it is morally possible that our Lord "was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin," because He did not yield but mastered the evil. On the other hand, to minimise the reality of the Temptation, as inconsistent with His divine nature, were to be guilty of the error of Apollinaris, Bishop of Laodicea, who held that the divinity of Jesus took the place of the human soul, or, to speak more accurately, that the Logos took the place of a reasonable soul (*νοῦς*) in Him, and to overlook the perfect humanity of our Lord, who assumed with His real manhood all the conditions of our human nature. Whether the Temptation was objective or subjective is not the question. For in the last instance it must have become subjective, that is, if it succeeded in entering into His inner consciousness and making itself felt. But whether the Temptation was real or not, that is the question, and it must be answered in the affirmative by all who believe in the perfect humanity of Christ, but who do not commit themselves to either a literal or a spiritual interpretation of St. Matthew iv. 1–4 or St. Luke iv. 1–13. Both records are the same with a slight variation. St. Luke reserves the last place for the most subtle and spiritual of the three—spiritual pride—and thus his account is psychologically correct. But it has been well observed by a writer in the *Church of Ireland Gazette* (31st March 1905), that it may be a misunderstanding of the nature of the narrative to speak of an "order" in the temptations, and that what our Lord gave to His disciples was a summary of a conflict extending over a long period, and in which each suggestion was many times repeated.

The three temptations are very significant, as they

respectively press upon each of the three elements of body, soul, and spirit that are united in the human personality. They might be, therefore, described as a recapitulation or summing-up of the temptations to which human nature is exposed in its progress through life. It was part of our Lord's rôle to pass through every age of life that He might sanctify every age; to bear the sorrows of life, that He might help men to bear theirs; and to endure the fierce assaults of evil to lead captive His body, imagination, and spirit. In this respect they are typical, in the sense of being representative, but they are none the less real.

All inquiries, as the late Dean Farrar[1] well said, "as to whether Christ's sinlessness rose from a possibility of not sinning (*posse non peccare*), or from an impossibility of sinning (*non posse peccare*), are rash intrusions into the unrevealed." But there can be no question that there was a direct operation of the evil upon His consciousness, and that that evil influence made itself felt but was repelled. This is the key to the interpretation of these narratives in which no hint is given of the manner or mode in which the evil presented itself to Him. For it is evident that the temptation came to Him as it comes to us. We do not, however, at once identify it with its source. But He did, for He saw further than we can. But it is more difficult for us to analyse the feelings of the tempted One and to see where the stress and strain of His Temptation lay. There are two things, however, to be remembered by those who would approach that ordeal through which the Saviour passed unscathed. In the first place, His Temptation was as real to Him as its results to us. Because He was the Son of Man

[1] *Commentary on St. Luke* (Cambridge), p. 142.

He could be tempted of evil and be consecrated through sufferings to be the Author of our salvation. And because He was the Son of God, the results of His victory are abiding, for all men and for all time. There are many pious persons, however, who cannot realise that the Holy One could be tempted and yet be without sin. They are inclined to banish from their minds this episode in our Lord's career as something inconceivable and impossible. "How could it be possible for One who is sinless to be tempted by sin?" they ask. But our Lord's life was one long temptation, one continuous trial which reached its climax on Calvary. It was a constant warfare between good and evil, and the good prevailed. The presence of evil does not contaminate, unless it conquers. As Shakespeare says—

> "Tis one thing to be tempted . . .
> Another thing to fall."

The evil was not in the tempted one, but in the source from which the temptation came. But because He was perfect man as we are, He was liable to be tempted in all points. The evil from without never penetrated His soul. It found no resting place within His heart. It never excited desire or instigated a wish in His mind which were disloyal to His Father or Himself. And yet there was a real attack made upon Him in His human nature. As man, He was born, was tempted and died; but, as the God-Man, He ever liveth to make intercession for us. Had it not been possible for Him to feel the force of the Temptation, how could He have really taken our flesh upon Him, and how could He sympathise with us in our trials and be touched with the feeling of our infirmities? Had His Temptation

not been real, why did He undergo it? Why was it recorded for our learning? What would be the moral advantage of a fictitious temptation to the Saviour or those He would save? Nay, through trials and temptations, sufferings and sorrows as real as ours, but far more intense, He passed in order to show us the way of holiness and to help us to walk therein.

The second point to be emphasised, in studying our Lord's Temptation, is, that it was His peculiar temptation all through His earthly life to put forth His power as the Son of God, whereas we are tempted to lose sight of the privileges we have of being made children of God, of having been incorporated into the body of Christ, of having been made communicants in His life, of having in Him the revelation of the Father and the redemption of the world. Stated briefly, it was His temptation to remember,[1] it is ours to forget. By reason of the personal unity of Christ, by reason of the union of His human and divine natures in one Person, there was a most subtle sting in each temptation that was offered to Him. This we shall see when we read the records of the trials in the light of Him who was tried.

The representative nature of the conflict is seen by a comparison between the First and Second Adam. From the Paradise of innocence, where man lived in the presence of God, the Scriptures had depicted the first man as having been driven forth into the trackless, barren desert of life, exposed to evil, and remote

[1] "What is Christ's Temptation is the excitement of his mind which was caused by the nascent consciousness of supernatural power" (*Ecce Homo*, p. 4, popular edition, by Sir J. R. Seeley, who in this chapter discusses the unique and appropriate nature of the temptations to the character of Christ).

from God. The Second Adam is now described as urged by the Spirit to seek the solitude of the wilderness in order to redeem from the rule of evil the life which that wilderness symbolised.

From the vision by the waters and the baptism by John, from the place where the heavens proclaimed Him and the Spirit rested upon His brow, with a growing sense of His Messiahship and an increasing consciousness of His mission and His miraculous powers, He sought the lonely wilds for meditation, prayer, and study. Standing on the threshold of what was to be one of the greatest epochs and crises in His life, He naturally desired to be alone. There He prayed and there He fasted and studied. There He brooded, amid the silence of nature, on the gulf that sin had made between God and man, on the evil that was laying and would lay so heavy a cross upon His spirit. But ever and anon another train of thought would present itself to mar the harmony in which the will of Jesus was moving with the will of God, and to traverse the Son's communion with the holy Father. Not from within but from without—the Scriptures would teach us—came these thoughts, these suggestions, about the conduct of His mission. The mountain ridge near Jericho is supposed to be the scene of that memorable conflict. There He remained, as perhaps His forerunner had done, in one of the many caves which are to be found in the sides of the hill, without food or rest, all-absorbed in the thought of the mission He had undertaken, and brooding so silently and deeply that the wild beasts did not seem to be aware of His presence (Mark i. 13). Around about Him lay strangely shaped stones, the fossilised fruit of the plain. Why should he be faint and weary if the power lay in His

hand to transform those wastes of desert and revive the wilderness? And the thought thus presented to Him gradually assumed the concrete form, "If Thou art the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." It was true that the wilderness was to rejoice and blossom like the rose, but in God's own time and in God's appointed way. Nature was to share in the redemption of man; its pangs were to cease and its groans of pain were to be changed into songs of praise; but the life and death of divine self-sacrifice lay between the travailing present and that glorious future. And the suggestions gradually formed themselves in His mind that there were many easier methods of salvation than a lifelong cross; that He should test His divine powers of which He was now conscious, and the wilderness would be already transformed into a garden of delight, and He Himself would no longer suffer the gnawings of hunger in the midst of the abundance His word would create in those inhospitable wilds. The desert was a type of death—solitary, barren, motionless; and death could only be vanquished by His dying; and restoration could only follow after resurrection. The Saviour was thus tempted to put forth His divine power to support His human nature, but as man He repudiated the suggestion; for man's life requireth not merely bread for the body but food for the soul. And as He stood deep in thought, perhaps looking up at one of pinnacles of the Temple gleaming in the distance, there came to Him the suggestion to cast Himself down from thence, to put His divine power to another test, for it had been prophesied that nothing should harm Him. But the thought was banished. For His God-given power was not to be displayed in satisfying

the whims of others, but in doing the will of God; nor was it to be revealed in unreasonable works of wonder, but in wonderful signs of love. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." This was the thought with which He checked the impulse.

Then before His eyes seemed to rise a vision of the world's wealth and glory, a panorama of splendour and brilliancy, luxury and refinement, a golden dream in the dark wilderness. And the thought presented itself, "All that is Thine if Thou wilt choose evil for Thy God." What point in this temptation could penetrate His divine armour? The subtle sting lay here. This was the presentment of the idea, "This is the world you have come to redeem, this is the kingdom you have come to recover by the way of suffering, humiliation, and death. That way is fraught with difficulty and uncertainty. It is now in the hands of the Roman emperor. Recover it now by self-assertion and by force[1] and redeem it by love and self-denial if you choose afterwards. Do not trust your powers too much. You will not succeed in making the world your vassal unless you pander to its sin." Here was a taunt that must have provoked Him to snatch His own from the evil that had usurped it and to crush its dominion for ever, to use His own power as the Son of God, and to recover the world before He had redeemed it by the life of the Son of Man, before He had healed the wounds that sin had made in the life of humanity. For redemption pre-

[1] "The narrative gains completeness and consistency by the hypothesis that the act of homage to the Evil Spirit to which Christ was tempted, was the founding His Messianic kingdom upon force" (*Ecce Homo*, p. 7). It is interesting to note that in the Fourth Gospel, which does not mention the Temptation, an attempt is described to seize our Lord by force and make Him a king (vi. 15).

cedes recovery. But, as Man, again Jesus resisted this temptation, and He would not allow His soul to be deceived by any inducement or to be led away by any career or prospect that would traverse the Father's will, and make null and void His own incarnation.

Such are the temptations that are described by the Evangelist as having been made by the Prince of Evil to the Saviour of men. It is very possible that these suggestions came to Him as He was maturing His line of action, in solitary retirement perusing a scroll of the Old Testament scriptures containing portions of Exodus—the account of manna (ch. xvi.); Deuteronomy (ch. vi.–viii.), which offered other suggestions by which the evil suggestions were overcome, and the Psalter (Ps. xci.). To studious, meditative minds evil suggestions often come in reading, and our Lord was a student as well as an observer. He had a deep knowledge and love of the Old Testament.

This view of our Lord's Temptation we venture to suggest with all reverence and sincerity. Coming to Him after a great spiritual crisis in His career, a momentous epoch in His life, the proclamation and the baptism of the Son of Man, it was a testing of His character and His faith in His Father by "a choice of Hercules," a selection of ways. The end to be attained by either course was the same, the redemption of mankind and the restoration of creation; but the means that were presented to Him for the attainment of that end were different. By the Father one way had been chosen. But He could not but feel the urgency of another way. Herein lay the stress and strain of the temptations to which the Son of Man was subject all through His earthly career. It is typical and re-

presentative, not only of His but also of our trials and difficulties. And as He resisted, we too can resist; nay, we must resist if our will is to move in harmony with the will divine; if we are to enjoy that service which is "perfect freedom."

CHAPTER XII

THE LONELINESS OF JESUS

THE loneliness of Jesus is a proof of His exalted and unapproachable nature as it was the price of His sublime and irreproachable character.

It is true that of Him it could be frequently said, that He was never less alone than when alone. For He found in communion with His Father that strength and solace that braced His soul for the many troubles and difficulties, the many trials and sorrows He had to bear. But it is also true of other hours in His life, that He longed for the society of His friends, that He delighted in the companionship of the Twelve, in the comradeship of Peter and James and John, in the sweet society of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus.

There were moments in His life when He felt the need of solitude ; when He withdrew from His followers to pray on the lonely mountain ; when He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness ; when He was so overpowered by the sense of our infirmities, which He was bearing, that He withdrew into the desert places and the hills to pray. Then, indeed, He felt that He had to engage in the battle of humanity and wage the war of the race alone. And He could stand alone because He had the support and presence of His Eternal Father to encourage and sustain Him.

He could stand alone ; He could bear our sorrows alone ; and He felt the isolation of standing on a lonely pinnacle which no other son of man could approach unto. Being perfect Man, as we are, He felt the need of human companionship ; He could not live alone. When it was borne in upon His soul that He was the God-appointed means of man's salvation, He went forth into the world upon His Father's business. He left the sweet home-life and the very dear and tender companionship of His mother, who treasured all her Son's sayings in her heart. A great wrench for both mother and Son was that separation. But He had not withdrawn Himself from man, for He could not live without love ; without giving it, even if He did not receive it. His nature yearned with a great intensity for society. In His hours of suffering He felt isolation keenly. In that mysterious agony of Gethsemane He longed for the sympathy and presence of His three truest and most tried followers. And it was only with a great effort that He dragged Himself away from them (Luke xxii. 41), and moved forward into the garden to meet His agony alone.

And as we stand before His cross and recall all that it meant for Him and for us, we instinctively feel the unapproachable nature of its conflict and the intense isolation of its passion.

But we know, too, that if He felt keenly His loneliness in His suffering, He also felt the presence of His Father more vividly and really when alone. In Him we have a divine example of a human experience. It is in solitude and isolation that men gain strength. Scripture teaches us everywhere that the man who wishes to do work for God must retire to meditate

and pray alone, before he can embark upon any enterprise for the welfare of man and the cause of the Church of Christ. The source of strength in a man's life often lies in the moments of seclusionand revelation, when God seems to take the man aside from the crowd into the lonely desert and there reveals Himself to his child in a wonderful way. Then the man is suddenly brought into the presence of his Maker. He seems to hear His voice and behold His face. The beatific glories are revealed to the creature ; and the Vision of the Creator is flashed upon his soul. The power that comes to a man at such a time will ever be the inspiration of all he does and suffers. From such periods of seclusion and isolation, when men have been removed from their brothers to be brought nearer their Father, the saints and leaders of men have gone forth to do battle for the right, and to lay down their life for what they conceived to be the truth. History, sacred and secular, records numerous instances of such revelations given in a lonely hour to the souls of men. Moses, the exiled prince, the would-be deliverer of his oppressed nation, found encouragement on the lonely mountain side, and was enabled to go forth in the strength of his vision to deliver his people. The burning bush, a vision of the presence of God in His creation, encouraged the solitary shepherd to go back to his work, from which he had fled, in the spirit and strength of the Lord.

To the lonely watcher on the isle of Patmos, when his life seemed well-nigh ended, the heavens were opened, and the Divine purpose in human life was revealed. Then the beloved disciple received the vision of the Lamb who went forth conquering and

to conquer, and he was endowed with the inspiration to write the epic of righteousness.

> "Such glimpses of the future did he see,
> When doors flew open to an unseen hand,
> And his worn spirit passed to that strange land,
> The mirror of eternity."

These are but a few examples of the many that teach us not to dread solitude, but to fear sin; not to shun retirement, but to study righteousness. For when alone in the silence and vastness, God is with us, and perhaps nearer than when in the throbbing heart of a great city. And when the Lord who reveals Himself even in the tiniest creature, even in the smallest bush, and yet is not seen, condescended to manifest Himself in a union still more close with man; when the Only-Begotten of the Father assumed a human nature, then indeed the tree of humanity glowed with the presence of Deity. Then appeared One whose presence was an inspiration to His brethren, but who found during His isolation from those brethren, in the abundant presence of the Father, the assistance that His human nature demanded.

When reading and speaking of the blessed Lord Jesus we are apt to fall into one or other of two errors—either that of ignoring His humanity or that of losing sight of His divinity. In the gospel of a sympathetic Saviour, who had come to seek and save that which was lost, His perfectly human nature is distinctly emphasised. It was that human nature that appealed to the Greek mind of the cultivated and sympathetic physician, St. Luke; it was that human nature that attracted the poor and the outcast to the feet of the Galilean prophet, where they found comfort and

encouragement. It was that human nature that increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man ; and it was that human nature that described with such human touches the things that are in man, and endured with such touching pathos the sufferings of our race. It was the human nature of the Christ that required to seek the Father in prayer on the lonely mountain ; it was to His human nature in the garden of grief that there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening Him.

But it is the divine nature of the Christ that we see in the power that conferred the forgiveness of sins, a clean heart, a pure soul, upon the sinful and fallen ; in the words of the Master to the poor sinner, " Thy sins have been forgiven " ; in the casting out of devils, and in the passing through the hostile crowds. It was the divine nature of the Son of Man that men worshipped and adored. Those who cast themselves down at the angel's feet are sternly rebuked ; but those who lay themselves down at the Saviour's feet are strengthened and uplifted, and are made as angels and ministers of grace. It was the divine nature of the Son of Man that the angel announced to Mary, and that the herald angels proclaimed with song to the shepherds on the glowing hills. It was the divine nature of the Son of Man that was revealed to the disciples in that last great scene of the gospel, when in the very act of blessing He parted from them and was translated into heaven. To greet the incarnate Son of God the earth and heaven break forth into song. Mankind takes up the angels' chant, *Gloria in excelsis.* For in that blessed Communion Service, which would mean so little had our Lord been only human, and now means so much because He was also divine—we

repeat the jubilant strains of the angel choir, we sing "Glory to God on high, and in earth peace, good will towards men." For such communion, such fellowship with the Saviour of men, we need a time of preparation and meditation which must of necessity be conducted alone. When alone with God we are never lonely, for His presence is more to us than the companionship of men.

Human life has many occasions on which man must stand alone. There are trials that must be endured alone and without a murmur. No earthly friend can help us at such times; when perhaps we have to fight for all we are worth with some besetting sin; when we feel that conscience does not commend a course that brings us worldly advancement; when we begin to see the light and to long for a clearer revelation of the will and mind of God; when suffering and sorrow, bereavement and death, have caused us to be left severely alone in the world. At such times we are reminded of the loneliness of Jesus, the isolation of the Son of Man; we are rebuked by His glorious trust in and dependence on the Father; and we are assured that if we will share in His loneliness we shall share in His fellowship — a fellowship divine, full of grace, full of tenderness, full of consolation and support for lonely and bewildered sinners, full of blessed hope and glorious promise to those who look for redemption in Jesus and find in Him

> "A light to lighten the Gentiles,
> And the glory of His people Israel."

CHAPTER XIII

THE SELF-REVELATION OF JESUS

(1) *The Son of Man*

THIS uncommon title, "Son of Man," was our Lord's favourite designation of Himself. He alone calls Himself "Son of Man." Others do so when repeating His words, as the Jews when referring to His own expression say, "Who is this Son of Man?" (John xii. 34).

What exactly did He mean by it? There is a long discussion concerning the meaning of the Greek phrase "the Son of Man," and the Hebrew and Aramaic equivalents, into which we have no desire to enter. The question as to whether our Lord used the term in a general or particular sense is settled by its use in Daniel vii. 13: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like unto the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven." From this passage the Master derived this expression, and it there denotes a definite personality.

This expression of Daniel was treated, Professor Dalman points out, as a Messianic title in two Jewish books, the *Similitudes of Enoch* and the *Second Book of Esdras*, but was not generally familiar to the Jews of our Lord's day in such a connection. "Who is the Son of Man?" they asked. We cannot, however,

go as far as that Professor when he says, "It was, what any Hellenist must necessarily have taken it to be, an intentional veiling of the Messianic character under a title which affirms the humanity of Him who bore it."[1] Our Lord seems to have taken up this expression of Daniel and to have employed it in a new and unique sense. He intended by it to set forth His perfect humanity and also to reveal Himself as a Man distinct from other men. But with the exception of St. Stephen's words, "I see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God," the Master is never addressed as Son of Man by His Church, but as Son of God. For it was felt that the latter term was more in keeping with His present state.

Our Lord referred to Himself frequently as the Son of Man, but more particularly when He wished to emphasise His humanity and His relation to man. In many of the passages where the name is found there is an anticipation of His death and consequent glory. The constant refrain of His discourses in the Fourth Gospel is "The Son of Man must be lifted up." To Nicodemus He said, "The Son of Man must be lifted up" (iii. 14). To the Jews in the Temple He cried, "When ye shall lift up the Son of Man then ye shall know that I am" (viii. 28). To the disciples He said, "And I, if I be lifted up, shall draw all men unto Myself" (xii. 32). And when Judas had left the upper room He said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified" (xiii. 31). And to the people who sought Him at Capernaum He said, "Labour not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which endures unto life eternal" (vi. 27); and "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have no life in

[1] *The Words of Jesus*, p. 255.

you." In these passages there is a reference to His Cross and Passion, His death for man and the sufferings that were the lot of His humanity.

As Son of Man He was removed from the earth. As Son of Man He is able to give us life, to help us to share in the virtues of His risen and glorified humanity. As Son of Man the Father hath given Him authority to judge. In all His relations with man He is Son of Man, as in all His relations with God He is Son of God. Therefore He said to Nathanael, "Hereafter shall ye see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." You shall see My glorified humanity; you shall find in Me an altar-stairs that slope to heaven, a ladder reaching unto God upon which His ministers and messengers ascend and descend. You shall behold Me coming in the clouds of heaven to judge the world and take up My kingdom. The phrase Son of Man signifies the uniqueness of His humanity and mission and the reality of His human nature.

Consider first the uniqueness of His humanity. As Son of Man He is the Representative of man. He is the Man of all men, the Head of the race. And as Son of Man He is God's ideal of man.

I. In the first place, He is our Representative. This term, however, is insufficient to describe His relation to us. He is not the elected spokesman of mankind in the same sense as a Member of Parliament is of his constituents. Nor is He an agent or one who acts for another. Scripture speaks of Him as our Mediator. "There is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." There is, therefore, no human parallel to the position our Lord occupies towards humanity. St. Paul used an expressive figure when

he described *Christians* as a body, "We being many, are one body in Christ" (Rom. xii. 5). He teaches us not to regard humanity in Christ as an aggregate of so many units, but as a living corporate body of which we all are members, joined together by the strongest of ties—a common origin, a common nature, and a common heritage. United together by that most subtle of all feelings—the sympathy or fellow-feeling which "makes the whole world kin," bound up with the life of the past by inherited feelings and faculties, tendencies and ailments, and connected with the life of the future by our children and our children's children, we mutually affect each other by that most mysterious of powers, moral influence, and we grow together side by side into a perfect whole, the complete oneness of which in all its various parts and functions our Master illustrated by the parable of the Vine and the Branches. Humanity in Christ is thus one vast organism—essentially and potentially—and the unification of the race is the grand goal towards which all unselfish efforts for the welfare of others tend. But of this vast organism Jesus is the head, in virtue of His being the Son of Man, the Head of the race, the one Man who stands before us as our Champion, as our Leader, as our Friend. Upon His alliance we can depend in every work for the improvement of our fellows. Upon His approval we can reckon in every endeavour for the better being of others. He is thus our Representative.

This is one way in which He is the Head of the race. In other points He represents all that is best in man. He is our Representative to God. By our organic union with Him His virtues are as it were ours, and our sins are as it were His. "He made Him to be sin

who knew no sin." In Him God sees us. In Him God accepts us. Is He not our best Representative when dealing with mankind, who taught us what true Fatherhood and true Brotherhood meant; who has impressed upon us over and over again that we were made for mutual help and co-operation, not to prey upon one another, not to regard others as tools, but as our fellow-subjects in the grand society of the Kingdom of God and as our brethren in the great family of Christ? In this family love denies no right, love asserts no pre-eminence, love is helpful, love is pure. And in the family worship of "our Father," in the Son's name, we give expression to our sense of our common origin, our corporate life and our universal hope.

And is He not our best Representative in our relations with God who has revealed to the Father a new humanity—His own creation, "For if any be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. v. 17); who had proved to the Father how good and true and devoted humanity can be and is when revived by the living Spirit of God; who has taken a glorified humanity with Him to the heavens; who has returned to the Father to intercede for us and to represent our interests because of what He was and is, because of His holy manhood, spotless life, and present glory.

As Son of Man Jesus was, therefore, the Father's ideal of man. His humanity was unique in its sinlessness, in its perfection. "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" "The prince of this world hath nothing in Me." Jesus never felt unworthiness. His consciousness was of filial obedience and self-sacrifice, not of contrition, not of self-reproach, much less of self-condemnation. It was not that His senses were dulled, or that

His conscience had not been quickened. He knew what sin was, because He lived among men. He knew what righteousness was, because He lived in communion with God. He was meek and lowly, yet He never reproaches Himself. And no one ever reproached Him for sin. The world is practically unanimous in pronouncing His life as the highest and purest life ever lived on earth, the best translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete. Through all kinds of life and experience He passed, but no breath of calumny touched Him. "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood," said Judas. "Have thou nothing to do with that just man," said Pilate's wife. "I find in Him no fault at all," said Pilate. "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth," wrote St. Peter. "Nothing purer, nobler, has yet dawned on human thought," wrote Channing. Such testimonies to His sinless nature are legion.

Furthermore, His goodness was not merely of the negative kind in its abstinence from sin; it was also of the positive kind in its works of righteousness. He was the ideal of all that was good and Godlike in human life. He revealed that ideal. That ideal was embodied in Him. No philosopher had conceived such an ideal; no poet had painted such a life. The Stoics had their imaginary wise man, the standard of moral conduct. But He was not of flesh and blood. Calm, unmoved, self-controlled, he was without the love, the holiness, the self-sacrifice, and the sanctification of Jesus. He was, after all, only an invention, and only existed in the imagination of the Stoics. The Jewish ideal of goodness was even less attractive. For it combined those features of legalism and formalism which were so conspicuous and objectionable in the

Pharisee. Their religious life was regulated by rule, ostentatiously pious, proudly righteous. This ideal, too, existed only in the imagination of the Jews. No one had ever lived it. It was not taken from the life, as the Christian's ideal was. But that life of Jesus could not have been invented. No invented or imaginary life could win love and attract souls—as His has done. "For it has been reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love," wrote one whose name has since been inscribed on the roll of the illustrious departed. Here then lies His power over man, because He was the Son of Man, a Man without a peer, for never man spake like this Man, never man lived like this Man, never man loved like this Man.

What a wonderful hand the Master had—probing without wounding, piercing without paining! What a divine grace rests upon every word He said, those imperishable words of life! What a divine charm hangeth around every deed He wrought—those never-to-be-forgotten deeds of love! We cannot handle or describe it. For it is ineffable. Like the delicate bloom of the grape, it vanishes at the touch; like the dew on the mountain, it has passed, or ever man was aware of its presence, back to its home in the deep. Wherever the Son of Man has laid that hand upon a life, it has softened and silenced the angry passions. He has soothed the shame and removed the stains. Has that hand been laid upon your life, reader? Then you can realise what a glorious presence He was to the simple folk of Galilee. If He has not, be it in the morning or in the twilight of your life, allow Him to do so, and you will find that the strongest, purest,

deepest and highest affection a Christian can enjoy is the love of the blessed Lord, who is the very life of the believer, the very joy of his heart. His comfort in human sorrow, and His forgiveness of human sin, are the two most precious gifts the Father has bestowed upon man.

It was the beauty of His life, the serenity of His love, the stainless perfection of His soul that made Him man's Representative to the Father and the Father's ideal of what a man should be. He alone is our Representative to the Father. He is the goal of prophecy, the light of the law. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. For He is the way to the holiness of the Father, to the knowledge of that Father's heart, and to live that Father's life. It was this perfection of life that made Him the Exemplar of all humanity, for He hath left us an example that we should follow in His steps. No man has yet reached or attained unto such heights of holiness. By that life the world shall be judged. By that life the world shall be condemned—because they believe not on Him and because He goeth to the Father (John xvi. 9, 10).

THE REALITY OF HIS MANHOOD

II. Moreover, His title "Son of Man" emphasises the reality of His manhood. "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us." He leads us to the Father and He represents us to the Father as the Son of Man.[1] He alone of all the men who have been born into this world was capable of performing this double task. For He is "the Lamb of God

[1] As the Son of God He represents the Father and reveals His will to man. *Vide* chapter on "The Son of God."

that taketh away the sin of the world." His sacrifice was acceptable to the Father. By Him the Father's will was perfectly obeyed. By Him the Father's will was fully realised. Therefore, His humanity was real. There was nothing fictitious about it. He was bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. He was subject to all the infirmities of our race. He was open to temptation like other men; although, like no other man, He resisted temptation and overcame the world. Because He was without sin, some think He could not have sinned. But it was in His power to sin. He did not, however, will to sin. If He had a nature to which sin was divinely impossible, how could He have endured the trials, the temptations that are inherent in the flesh? How could He, the Captain of our salvation, have been made "perfect by sufferings"? (Heb. ii. 10). If the temptations which were presented to Him at the beginning of His career were only imaginary, what assistance is rendered to man when his champion fought only the semblance of a battle? No matter how or when those thoughts forced themselves upon His mind, there was a real battle fought and won by Christ with sin and the world. Thus he learned obedience by the things He suffered (Heb. v. 8), and thus He is able to sympathise with us in our infirmities, having been tried in all points as we are, yet without sin (Heb. iv. 15), and thus being made perfect He became Author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him (v. 9).

In the case of the Son of Man there was, then, a real testing and a real development of those qualities of obedience and patience, resignation and endurance, which are human virtues—sown and grown in the human heart, the outcome of human experience, as

contrasted with the more divine qualities of holiness, communion, and love. From the beginning to the end of His human career He was engaged in the contest with evil. The struggle was constant and terrible. The cup was bitter and full of sorrow, but there was a victory at the last. The will of the Saviour moves in perfect harmony with the will of God. "The cup which My Father hath given Me to drink, shall I not drink it?" The material He had to work upon—the flesh—is weak and hard to mould into shape. It is difficult to compose a beautiful poem out of such material. But He did so. He proved Himself a perfect Master in the art of expressing the beautiful in human life. No sculptor ever had such control over his stone; no musician ever wielded such power over his chords, no poet ever wove such wondrous harmonies out of his words as Jesus did from human life. He realised the ideal of man. His life was a perfect poem, a sublime song, a noble masterpiece.

Thus He was fully qualified and sufficiently prepared to perform the work that has been given to Him to do—

(1) To represent us as our High-Priest;
(2) To confer salvation upon us;
(3) To judge the world.

He can plead our cause with the Father in a manner no angel could. For He knows what we are, weak and frail. He knows what we have to bear—the stress and the strain of temptations from within and without, the bitter anxieties and heart-breaking sorrows of life, the unremitting conflict with evil, the constant apprehension of danger, and all the ills that flesh is heir to.

As One who was tried and tested and yet found to be without sin, He has proved to man His divine descent from God. "And no man hath ascended up to heaven save He who came down from heaven, even the Son of Man" (John iii. 13). He has established His divine commission. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). And He has shown that He Himself, who was without sin, has power and authority to deal with sin, and to release men from the influence and spell of sin. For He only who did live a sinless life could teach men how to live such a life. Only He who overcame sin in Himself could overcome sin in others. Only He who was tempted in all points as we are, could pity and save those who are tempted.

The title "Son of Man" is thus endeared to us by its associations with the sins of our race. He came to save us. And in order to do this, He was in all points man as we are, that He might live and die as man that so He might teach us to live and die as He died; and that He might make us what He is Himself, good and loving, tender and true, and so confer salvation, or soundness of mind and soul, upon us.

And to Him, because "Son of Man," the Father hath given authority to execute judgment (John v. 27). How divinely suitable is such an arrangement. He is to judge man who understands man. He is to judge men's lives whose life is the standard of man. He is a judge who knows our case thoroughly, who is familiar with all the circumstances of our life, who can, therefore, put Himself in our place, because He has been in it. With confidence and hope we can look forward to such a judgment. How different would it be if there had never been a "Son of Man," if the

Word had not become flesh ! Then had we a Judge—just and merciful, indeed—but One who could not sympathise fully with us in our hours of weakness ; One who could not possibly feel the sting or realise the awful trial of temptation ; One who would, indeed, be just, but who would judge us according to the very letter of the law ; One who would, indeed, be merciful, but whose mercy could never fully move the soul of man to repentance. Whereas now we have a Judge fair and compassionate. For His own spotless life shows man that Heaven's way with man is just, because its standard of righteousness has been actually attained and made manifest by Him. And while that life convinces all men of sin, because they have failed to attain to it, because their lives show up dark and black beside it, as even the whitest linen in the driven snow, yet His abundant compassions fail not. He pities us when judging us, because He has our whole case before His view. And his judgment is given not in sternness that forbids, but in love that wins. But the quality of mercy is neither strained nor slack. Leniency is not mercy. Our Judge, having borne our humanity, knows its circumstances and its needs. He knows that our flesh requires discipline, if it is to be improved. Salvation is not a letting-off but a making whole and sound. And so the punishments are awarded by our Judge. But their object is not retribution and compensation, but restoration and redemption. His sentences are remedial not punitive, ameliorative not retaliatory. He chastens us to make us better. His verdict is given in love, not in revenge. So He leads us onwards and upwards, making us truer men for our trials, purer men for our temptations, more

Godlike for our sufferings, more Christlike for our sorrows.

Thus He saves us from our sins, redeeming us from their power as well as from their guilt ; and thus He confers salvation upon us, making us holy and undefiled. And at the last He shall present us faultless [1] before the throne of the Father—freed, emancipated, and prepared to worship the King in the beauty of holiness. This He doth in virtue of His having reconciled us " in the body of His humanity through death." [2]

In the passage (Matt. xxv. 40-46) " Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me," etc., our Lord showed His consciousness of His representative character as " Son of Man." This passage also indicates the fact that as Son of Man Christ is not reduced to the ordinary level of humanity, but that humanity is recapitulated and therefore raised in Him, its archetype and real root, the principle of its unification, regeneration, and union with Himself.

[1] Jude 24. [2] Col. i. 22.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SELF-REVELATION OF JESUS

(2) *The Son of God*

WE now come to our Lord's other title "The Son of God." With regard to this description of Him Professor Dalman declares that "Jesus never applied to Himself the title 'Son of God,' and yet made it indubitably clear that He was not merely 'a' but *the* Son of God." This is not a correct account of the Fourth Gospel, at any rate. For, generally speaking, whenever in that Gospel He wished to refer to His unique relation to the Father, whenever He desired to emphasise that relation, whenever He required to dwell upon His pre-existent state, His divine glory, and His mission, Jesus spoke of Himself as "the Son of God." As the Son of God He offered Himself to faith. "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" (x. 35). "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the Only-Begotten Son of God" (iii. 18). As the Son of God He speaks of Himself in connection with the resurrection of the dead. "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live" (v. 25). And, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might

[1] *The Words of Jesus*, p. 280.

be glorified thereby" (xi. 4). As the "Son of God" He declares His divine mission and consecration. "If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, say you of Him whom the Father hath *sanctified and sent* into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (x. 36). This last quotation is important, as it refers to the baptismal declaration, "This is (or Thou art, Luke, Mark) My beloved Son in whom (or Thee, Luke, Mark) I am well pleased" (Matt.), which is found in the Synoptists, and is echoed in the words of the Baptist, "He that sent me to baptize, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding on Him, He it is who baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." The original of these sayings is found in the forty-second chapter of Isaiah, "Behold My Servant whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." The words of the divine voice at the Transfiguration also refer us to this passage. They expressly mark Him out as a specially consecrated and commissioned Messenger of God to men. And this view is brought out by the additional saying, "Hear ye Him." As the special Messenger of God—the Father's appointed envoy to humanity—He is the beloved Son (ἀγαπητός) of the Father—the Son who exists in the Father's love (ἀγάπη). "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (xv. 10). But He is even more than "the Beloved Son." He is "the Only-Begotten Son" of God. That is, He is a Son of God in a sense that no man else is or was. The expression does not signify an ethical or religious

relation to God. Others might possess it, if it were so. But there is here a deeper significance, a diviner relation. It is true that in the 2nd Psalm we read "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee," an expression which the Jewish commentators, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Kimchi, interpret of David. It is true that in the 89th Psalm Jehovah says, "I have David My servant; with My holy oil have I anointed him. I will make him My firstborn (πρωτότοκος), higher than the kings of the earth." But it is a question whether the King of Zion is not here intended to represent the whole nation collectively. Professor Dalman (*The Words of Jesus*, p. 269) writes: "Judging by the citation from the Pentateuch (Israel is My son, My firstborn, Ex. iv. 22) it appears as if Israel were meant throughout." If so, these psalms could not have been understood in a Messianic sense. And if they were, it would be a question whether the Jews, who had such scruples regarding the use of the name of God, would have called their Messiah "the Son of God." "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (τοῦ εὐλογητοῦ) cried the High Priest (Mark xvi. 61). Furthermore, Professor Dalman considers that there is no difference between "the Beloved Son" (ὁ υἱὸς ὁ ἀγαπητός), and "the Only-Begotten Son" (ὁ υἱὸς ὁ μονογενής), basing his opinion on the fact that the LXX translate the Hebrew of "thine only son" of Gen xxii. 2, by τὸν υἱόν σου τὸν ἀγαπητόν, "the Beloved Son." The only Son would naturally be the Beloved Son. It is also remarkable that this word "Only-Begotten" (μονογενής) is used three times in the Gospel of St. Luke *i.e.*, of the son of the widow of Nain (vii. 12), of the daughter of Jairus (viii. 41), and of the lunatic boy (ix. 38). But no matter what the

origin or associations of this expression may have been, no matter what its earliest connection and its latest meaning were, there is one thing apparent, and that is, that Jesus used it in a sense that was new and fresh when He said, "God so loved the world that He gave His *Only-Begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but should have eternal life" (John iii. 16). The Master expressly distinguishes His relation to the Father from the relation of other men to that Father. He speaks of God as One who especially loved Him—as One to whom He especially belonged. A tender and pathetic illustration of this point is found in that exquisite communion prayer, when Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee." "Righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee; but I know Thee, and these know that Thou hast sent Me. And I have made known Thy Name to them, and shall declare it, that the love with which Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them" (xvii. 1, 25, 26). And when sending a message through Mary Magdalene to His brethren, He said, "I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and your God" (xx. 17).

THE MESSENGER OF THE FATHER

Such then was the Father's special Messenger, the Father's only Son. As the only Son, the Son who was without a peer, the Son who stood in a unique relation to the Father, He was well qualified to act as His Messenger to make known the Father's name, to reveal the Father's love, and to declare the Father's purpose to man. If we consider the revelation we

shall see how fit the Son of God was to give it. The Fatherhood of God was known to the Jews before He fully declared it. "We must not minimise the part which the conception of God as a Father has played in the Old Testament," writes Canon Sanday. But we notice a remarkable development and purification of this idea. For the Saviour showed how that Fatherhood was for all, not merely for the Jew. He pointed out that that Fatherhood was eminently spiritual, dissociating it from the material notion that literal obedience is the fulfilment of the Father's will. "God is a Spirit, and is to be worshipped in spirit and truth." The Father is "Holy," "Righteous," "Merciful," and "Perfect," and requires His children to try to be such. The Master thus revived the spiritual communion with God which had found so tender an expression in the psalms that were written by the returned exiles from Babylon's wave.

> "It is good for me to draw near to God.
> I have put my trust in the Lord God." (lxxiii. 28).
> "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and
> Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." (li. 10).
> "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean,
> Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." (li. 7).

He gave voice to a divine unrest that was troubling the best spirits of His day when He gave His eternal revelations of the Father that satisfy and soothe the troubled soul of man. For while emphasising the universal range and the spiritual character of that Fatherhood, He did not fail to reveal His ineffable love, His gracious gift, His wonderful purpose to redeem and to save His children. And thus He brought Him home to the consciences and hearts of men. He taught men how to love God. Who was better qualified

to give such a revelation than He who was in the bosom of the Father, than He who was the "Only-Begotten Son of God?" For in revealing Himself—His own goodness, love, self-sacrifice, and truth—He revealed the Father. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me?" (xiv. 9). The words He speaks are the Father's, the works that He doeth are the Father's (xiv. 10). He loves the Father (xiv. 31), and He acts as the Father hath given Him commandment. As the Father knows Him, so He knows the Father (x. 15). And the Father who hath sent Him is with Him (viii. 16), and beareth witness of Him (viii. 18), and as the Father speaketh to Him so He speaks (xii. 50). For the Father loveth (φιλεῖ) the Son, and showeth Him all things that He Himself doeth (v. 20).

Thus the Son of God revealed the Father's name and heart and character to man. That revelation was His exclusive possession. No one else had any right, any qualification to make such a revelation. He only who understands the Father can make known the Father (xvii. 25). He only "whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God" (iii. 34). In the true spirit of Sonship He exclaims, "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father, for My Father is greater than I" (John xiv. 28).

THE HEIR OF THE FATHER

Again, as the Son of God He is Heir to the throne of God, and as Heir of the Father He has authority (ἐξουσία) over all flesh (xvii. 2). As the Son of God all things are committed unto Him. "The Father

doth not give the Spirit by measure unto Him." "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand" (iii. 35). "For as the Father raiseth the dead, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (v. 21). "For as the Father hath life in Himself, even so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (v. 26). As the Son He is utterly dependent on the Father. "I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear I judge, and My judgment is just, because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (v. 30). As Son He receives everything from His Father. The disciples are the Father's gift (xvii. 24). But as Son of God He has everything, and through Him everything is given. The disciples have life in a derived sense as His gift. The Kingdom of God is His, because He is the Son and has authority to convey eternal life to all whom the Father hath given Him (xvii. 2).

This relation of Jesus to the Father is His permanent possession. It cannot be passed on to others, because no other could be equal to it, and because it is so intimately connected with His very personality that He cannot think of Himself without it. And He is conscious of no beginning and of no ending to that relation. Through that relation the Father dwelleth in Him. "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me." As the Son of God, He has power to make those who receive Him children of God (i. 12). But these are born, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God (i. 13). As the Son of God, He has taught men to realise their tender relation with the Father. He has revealed a Fatherhood in grace as well as in nature, a Fatherhood that redeems as well as a Fatherhood that creates. His whole life, as Son of

God, was a manifestation of the Father's love, a revelation of the Father's glory. As Son He alone experienced that love. It was His whole existence, His supreme happiness. And as Son He alone had beheld the glory of the Father, He alone had shared it with Him. "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with (*παρά*) Thine own self, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with (*παρά*) Thee" (xvii. 5).

As the Son of God, the life of Jesus was the eternal expression of the universal Fatherhood of God and spiritual Sonship in Him. He has taught men to honour the Father, He has taught men to love the Father, He has taught men to honour the Son as they honour the Father (v. 23). For He has taught us the first words of true religion, "Abba, *Father*," and He has given us the highest word, the grandest revelation, in "My Father."

Thus He is the best Representative of God to man. For He is the consecrated and specially sent Son. He has shown and He still shows how true and loving, how glorious and gracious that Father is, winning men to love Him and to trust Him for Himself, and not for His works and gifts: a true Son of a true Father—the Son of God who became the Son of Man to make the sons of men sons of God.

CHAPTER XV

THE SIGN OF CHRIST

THE keenest controversy has ever been waged on the subject of miracles. But to the mind of St. John the miracles of Christ signified something very different from the violation or suspension of the laws of nature with which the miraculous has been identified by many. The miracles of Christ are not described as "portents" or "wonder-causing deeds" in this Gospel, but as "signs" and "works." Signs they are, because evidences of higher order than the natural, manifestations of a higher nature than the human, proofs of a divine power at work in our midst, revelations of a divine love, a divine will, a divine mind, and a divine Personality. Works they are, because the natural deeds of a supernatural nature, the logical expressions of His Person, His character and His mission, or, as St. Athanasius put it, in "rational sequence" with that Person and that mission (*De Incarn.*, 31). Works they are, because efforts directed to an end—an ordinary definition of work—and that end an ethical one, the redemption of man, the restoration of Creation, and the glorification of God. Works they are, because the phenomena proper to Him as the Son of God—the superhuman Christ.

In a word, He manifested His Nature and His Person

in His works, and His works are the evidences of that Nature and Person, setting the seal of truth upon His words. As we have seen in a former chapter, He appealed in the first instance to His Person, and in the last instance to His works (John xiv. 11). But that Person was manifested in and by and through the works. For otherwise how could it have been revealed?

The miracles of Christ, of which His incarnation and resurrection are chief, are not, then, interruptions of the course of nature, but revelations of a new order of things hitherto undreamt of in our philosophy. The evidential value of miracles has been called in question by many gifted men. Matthew Arnold said, when commenting on this very subject, that "if he could change the pen with which he wrote into a pen-wiper, he could not make what he wrote any the truer or more convincing." Our Lord Himself represented Abraham as saying to Dives, "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rose from the dead." But the fact which the Master of men had before Him, and the English writer had not, is this, that miracles can only confirm an already existing faith, they cannot create it where it is not yet existent. For instance, our Lord after His resurrection only appeared to believers. It would have been superfluous to appear to others. The natural prejudice against the miraculous is so strong, that a man's mind cannot be convinced when his heart refuses to respond. Our minds must be open to reason, and our hearts must be ready to accept what our mind approves if we are to believe in the supernatural life and its modes of operation. No man can be convinced of anything against his will, while he

may refuse to believe anything he likes, no matter how strong the proof. Even in the most ordinary affairs of life an unbiased, impartial attitude of mind is the condition of arriving at the truth. How much more is such a disposition of mind the prerequisite of spiritual faith in Christ? Belief in Him and His works is not then a sign of credulity, but it is a test of a man's moral condition, a sign of his desire to know the truth and of his readiness to receive it, no matter how opposed it may be to his previous way of thinking.

The brethren of Dives lacked this moral condition. As they were not true servants of the truth, they would not be roused from their spiritual supineness even by a visitant from another world. A miracle would not convince them of those truths of religion which they treated with contempt. This was why our Lord's "signs" were not received by those of the Jews who were impervious to the appeals of the Teacher of righteousness, but were gratefully recognised by the few who were "waiting for the consolation of Israel." It was only they who had the heart to believe that did believe, just as it was only they who had the wish to hear that did hear.

Similarly, we who believe in the divine Person of Christ—a belief that is only in the last resort dependent upon miracles, but that is principally fostered in our hearts by the sense of His living presence in our midst, and by the undying memory in the Church of His life and His words—find no difficulty in believing in His works. For He Himself bears witness to the fact that it is the Father abiding in Him that doeth His works (John xiv. 10). A false appeal to such testimony would be even more remarkable than the fact it was

produced to establish. The canon of miracle which Hume laid down in his *Essays* in the words, "When anyone tells me that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself whether it be more probable that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the fact which he relates should really have happened. I weigh the one miracle against the other, and according to the superiority which I discover I pronounce my decision, and always reject the greater miracle"—would be literally satisfied by those who, having applied it to the case before us, decide that it would be a far greater miracle for such a Person as Christ to deceive than to perform the works to which He Himself appeals. In marked contrast with Hume, who based his objections to Christianity as miraculous on the *a priori* impossibility, the antecedent inconsistency of the miraculous with the natural, Professor Huxley stated, in a private letter to the Dean of Wells (1877), that it would be an error to suppose that the Agnostic rejected theology because of its puzzles and wonders. "He rejects it simply because, in his judgment, there would be no evidence sufficient to warrant the theological propositions, even if they related to the commonest and most obvious everyday propositions."

But the fact acknowledged even by the opponents of Christianity, that there was such a Person, is in itself sufficient evidence to establish the propositions which have been based upon Him, even as the character of that Person is in itself adequate to confirm the truth of His words and works.

Certain of these works and words—signs of the divine life, sounds of the divine language—St. John records with the twofold purpose in view, that they

may produce in the hearts and minds of those who study them the conviction that the "Word made flesh," the Christ of history, was the Son of God, the Christ of the Church, so that they may have that communion with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, which is the life of the believer. Indeed, the Gospel of St. John might well be termed the Book of Signs: signs of a life present in the life and in the death of men; signs of a spiritual power at work in the most ordinary incidents as well as in the direst exigencies of life. But of these signs the sign of the resurrection is the sign *par excellence* of Christ. When the Jews asked Him for a sign—"What sign shewest thou, seeing that thou doest these things?"—He answered, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," referring to His own resurrection from the dead. This was then the Lord's great sign. By it the presence of a supernatural power was revealed in life, and the veil of the Unseen was moved aside for a brief and all too hurried glance into its infinite mysteries. And this sign throws a side-light on all the other signs that are subordinate to though leading up to it.

And by this sign our faith stands or falls. We believe in the risen Christ. That faith is the corner-stone of the Church, the basis of her present career, the security for her future success. That He rose from the dead, and that death hath no more dominion over Him, is the text of the first preachers of the gospel of Jesus. We are not committed to any theory of the resurrection. We do not know with what body Jesus appeared to His disciples after His crucifixion. That it was a body superior to earthly conditions is plain from the manner of its passing

through closed doors and ultimately into thin air. That it was a spiritual body is clear from the words of St. Paul, "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Recent theories of the relation of the visible to the invisible world at any rate make it more easy for us to conceive the passing of His glorified body into supra-physical conditions of existence. We may not—we certainly cannot—explain the process of the resurrection, or the formation of the resurrection body. But one thing we most certainly believe, that our Lord rose from the dead, that He conquered death and all its powers, that He removed its sting and terror, and made that terrible departure an entrance to a bright and glorious existence in another dwelling-place in the Father's kingdom. That we know and that we believe.

But the Apostle presents a dreadful alternative to us. "If Christ be not risen." Suppose by any chance that the disciples had been deceived by a series of apparitions, ghost-like appearances, would not the Church, which is built on the risen Lord, be shaken to her foundations?

Suppose by any terrible mishap the tomb had been rifled in the night, and the body of Jesus taken away and buried in a secret place by some of the disciples, would not Christianity be identified with a lie? Would not the Church be denounced as an organisation created to propagate falschood?

Christianity would fall clattering to the earth with a great and terrible fall.

If that sad scene of the entombment—when the Crucified was taken down from the Cross, tenderly and lovingly, and borne by weeping and sorrowful disciples, and laid in His sepulchre—if that picture

were the closing scene in His career, how black and dark would all things appear to us! We should be like the poor heart who stood outside the tomb crying, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." We should be in a great and terrible darkness. We should behold the downfall of Christianity, the triumph of the world-power, the doom of virtue, and the apotheosis of vice!

And what would the world lose if such a thing were true? The fabric of morality would totter to the ground. There would be no restraint on vice or lust. Sin would become openly and wilfully public and rampant. For it is the Christian ideal of character, and the Christian hope of eternal life, that have raised the moral life of humanity; and if you take these away you leave the path open to evil to possess the earth, and earth would become a veritable hell.

We cannot, however, contemplate such a state of things. For we shall never surrender our faith in the resurrection to any argument; not even if a manuscript or an inscription were discovered in an ancient tomb in Jerusalem, of apostolic times and by apostolic hands, declaring that the resurrection was a myth, would we believe that—

> "Far hence He lies,
> In the lone Syrian town;
> And on His grave, with shining eyes,
> The Syrian stars look down."

For we believe that He rose again from the dead, and therefore we believe in our own resurrection from the tomb. And we have greater proofs of the risen Christ than mere documents and inscriptions. We

ourselves are epistles of Christ. Upon our hearts He has written His name. We have felt His glorious Presence near us, with us, within us, at many times in our lives. In silent prayer by the roadside, in our rooms, and in the Church, we have felt the breath of the Saviour upon our spirits. In the glad and solemn worship of God's people, amid the hush of reverence and the voice of song, our souls have perceived Him. In that great event in our spiritual life—our Confirmation—when we knelt down to receive the gift of His Holy Spirit, " the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord "—then we indeed experienced the strange rapture and mysterious joy that only the Presence of Jesus could inspire in the hearts of His people. And in our thrice blessed Communion, where we draw nigh to Him and He draws nigh to us, where we enjoy a foretaste of the bliss of heaven, where we shall evermore dwell in Him and He in us, our poor human spirits, so frail, so fleshly, so easily cast down, so easily provoked, are quickened and braced, lifted up and strengthened, as by the grasp of an Eternal Hand stretched out to draw us near.

But these are not all. There are other memories tender and potent in all our lives, when we have been brought into close contact with the Master of men ; when we have found Him and He has found us ; when the heart has been touched and purified, perhaps in the chamber of grief, perhaps on a bed of pain, perhaps by unexpected joy and gladness. The Saviour has many avenues to the human heart, just as we have many approaches to His Heart of infinite love. For the great crises of history do not take place in the

intellectual world, but in the soul-life. It is the heart that makes the theologian. It is the soul that makes the Christian.

> "It is the heart, and not the brain
> That the highest doth attain."

Those who do not believe in a risen Christ may allow that Jesus is for us, as He was for the men of His own time, all that makes for pureness of intellect and clarity of soul, all that tends to the formation of character. But if men take away from us the risen Christ, if they deprive us of the glorious hope of rising to the light immortal, the golden prospect of a life eternal, they leave us nothing that may either stimulate our thought or lift up our hearts. The preaching of the Cross and the faith in the Crucified have uplifted human life with a divine lever. And that preaching were vain, and that faith were vain, if Christ be not risen.

But is it a thing credible or conceivable that the Apostles willingly endured martyrdom, braved persecution of the most terrible kind, excommunication from the services of their religion, banishment from home, separation from family ties,—and all this for the sake of a hallucination, a dream which they knew in their hearts was not true? What moved St. Paul to undergo the terrible list of sufferings and hardships he rehearsed in his Epistle to the Corinthians? What was it that gave him boldness in the presence of King Agrippa but faith in the risen Christ? "That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles." What was the text of St. Peter's great sermon on Pentecost but

the resurrection? What were the Apostles expected to be but witnesses of the resurrection? (Acts i. 22). And what has the Church been ever since but a witness of the risen Christ? The risen Christ, who has brought life and immortality to light—that is the Christian's hope, the sheet-anchor of his soul, the basis of his present life, the security of his future progress. It is to Him the glad Easter songs of the Church point us—to Him who, raised from the dead, dieth no more. It is to Him our grateful Easter prayers are lifted. For He has opened the gate of everlasting life to us. He has shown us how to rise from the tomb of self and sin and breathe the pure and genial atmosphere of holiness and peace and love, which is heaven. "May He teach us so to die daily from sin that we may evermore live with Him in the joy of His resurrection."

"Whatever may have happened at the grave," writes Dr. Harnack, "and in the matter of appearances, one thing is certain: this grave was the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished, and that there is life eternal."

CHAPTER XVI

THE MIRACLE OF CHRISTIANITY

WE may ourselves be convinced of the signs of Christ, but yet we must meet the questions that are put to us on this subject fairly and without shirking. A well-known scientist, Sir Oliver Lodge, in a lecture at Birmingham on "Science and Religion with special reference to the subject of Miracles," suggested, as a possible explanation of a miracle, a utilisation of unknown laws by mental or spiritual powers. But, if miracles are to be regarded subjectively with reference to their effect upon the minds and lives of men, it would follow that what seems miraculous at one time and one place to one set of people, would not appear miraculous at another time, in another place and to another set of people. Human knowledge is truly relative and never absolute in this life, where it is conditioned by space and time. And many believe with Canon Sanday that "miraculous means were more sparingly used by God than is thought."

But to say that "if the miracles of the first century had been wrought before the specialists of the twentieth, the version we have of them might be different," is surely to depend too much upon the *a priori* presumption against the miraculous powers of Christ and His Apostles. The miracles of Christ are unique,

without a parallel in history. They are not to be placed on the same basis with the wonder-works of the Egyptian hermits or with the faith-cures of the Roman Church. There is nothing legendary about them. They were the unique signs of a unique life, wrought, not to astonish man, but to reveal the Father's power and the child's weakness. Such miracles are not a dead-weight around the neck of Christianity. For we cannot eliminate miracle from the life of Christ, and yet account for His wonderful power over men when removed from their ken. As Mr. Illingworth says, "We cannot separate the wonderful life or the wonderful teaching from the wonderful works. They involve and interpenetrate and presuppose each other, and form in their indissoluble combination one harmonious picture." No rational critic has ever attempted to treat that life as a myth. Outside the Rationalist Press Association no one has ventured to deny that He existed. And Professor Huxley, writing of the 15th chapter of St. Mark, which gives the account of the Lord's crucifixion, says he does not "see why any one should have a word to say against the inherent probability of the narrative," in which, however, is contained the story of a death that has been the life of the world. "There are no signs," said another critic, "of the time when the far-off figure of Jesus no longer attracts the critic and the student." [1]

Using the word "miraculous" in its ordinary acceptance, who can say that Christianity is not miraculous?

The age of miracles in one sense is passed, but in another sense still continues. When God places

[1] Mr. F. C. Burkitt, Church Congress, 1907.

Himself in connection with a man's life, and produces such changes in his heart as regeneration, conversion, peace and comfort, gladness and enlightenment, are not such changes miracles? Are they not wonders? Do not they astonish men as much as the sudden calm that follows the storm at sea? Are they not "signs"? Do they not bear evidence of an ever-present power at the heart of the universe, controlling the lives of men, and confirming the word of the Son with "signs following"? Could any natural force, such as electricity, or the X-rays, alter a man's heart or change a man's life? Can hypnotism or thought-reading or clairvoyance produce a true repentance or sorrow for sins past, and desire to lead a better life? Can any human art or influence give man the balm of the divine forgiveness that breathes in the comfortable words of Jesus? No; the miracle of a new birth and a new life is a spiritual wonder, and none the less true because such.

We do not, therefore, appeal to the miracles of healing that were performed by the Old Testament prophets or the great Master and His disciples. That class of miracles may no longer be wrought, but another class of miracles has taken its place, one to which our Lord's words, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for the æon" (John xiv. 16), emphatically point. Wherever we see a man down as low as he can be, and with the power and help of God rising out of his misery and misfortune, there is a moral miracle, a miracle in the world of will and action, which is quite as great a proof of the existence of a loving and omnipotent Father as the gifts of healing and physical restoration given by the Master to His disciples. We

may not see the lame walking, or the blind receiving their sight at the word; but we do see those who are crippled and maimed, the halt and the blind in spiritual life and moral character, restored and renewed by the Spirit of Christ.

It is such miracles, such wonderful changes that cannot be explained as the result of any natural cause, that are the miracles to which we appeal as proofs of our Lord's presence. We believe in Him, not because of the words of His disciples, but because, like the Samaritans, we have heard His words and seen His works ourselves. Wherever a single soul has been consoled by His comfortable words, a solitary sinner converted and strengthened by His accents of pity and rebuke, an evil heart made pure and sweet by His words of divine forgiveness—there is a miracle that belongs to a higher plane than all the charismata of the Spirit, gifts of healing and of speech, that were manifested in the early Church; and a proof more potent, more difficult to explain away than the miracles of the Gospel. "Verily I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works which I do he shall do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to My Father." The change His Spirit has made in the world and in the hearts of men since Pentecost is, indeed, a greater work than any miracle He ever wrought. Startling wonders in the natural world performed to arrest men's attention and to restore nature, although wrought in love and purity, are more passing in their influence and effects than the sudden or gradual alteration in a man's character and career, which will be for the rest of his earthly life an evidence of his faith and of Him in whom he has believed. It is the Presence of Christ manifested in

the hearts and lives of His people that is the impregnable fortress of the faith. The assurance of that Presence has made men brave martyrdom and sufferings worse than death. It is the promise of that Presence that has sustained the missionary amidst the toil and hardship and loneliness of his exiled life.[1] If the sense of that Presence go with us through the day all labour will seem light, all sorrow will pass away, and all joy will be enhanced; our labour will be sanctified by the Saviour's touch, and our rest will be hallowed by the Saviour's breath.

It is this continuous Presence of Christ that has given Christianity its power and position in the world. Men have tried to get rid of this influence and to explain it away by referring it to natural causes. The personality of Christ, according to Professor Harnack, whose views of the Christ have already been examined, has no place in a gospel which merely concerns God and the soul. "The gospel," he declares in his *Essence of Christianity*, "as Jesus proclaimed it, has to do with the Father only and not with the Son." "It is the gospel of the Father," he declares, "in which the Son has no place." It is, indeed, true that a man can think and teach rightly about Christ only and in so far as he has already begun to live according to Christ's gospel. "For if any one willeth to do His work, he shall know of My doctrine, whether I speak of Myself," said the Master (John vii. 17).

It is quite possible that the Master, as He employed illustrations and expressions in Ecclesiasticus, appropriated the language of current Jewish literature, the words of the Books of Enoch and Wisdom, concerning the Son of Man and His kingdom and His revela-

[1] So David Livingstone said before the University of Glasgow.

tion. It is quite possible that His disciples saw in their Master Him whom Enoch describes (xlviii. 6) as "chosen and hidden with God before the world was created and to be with Him to eternity";[1] as One "who reveals all the treasures of that which is concealed" (xlvi. 3); and as Him "in whom dwells the Spirit of Wisdom and the Spirit of Him who gives knowledge." But that circumstance does not prove that our Lord's teaching was lacking in originality and therefore in authority. He did not come to revolutionise the religion of Israel, but to fulfil it. In the Law and the Prophets His teaching had its roots. His ethical pronouncements consummated the principles of the prophets. It was the goal towards which they had been reaching after. But His originality, His uniqueness as a Teacher, consisted in this, that He spake with "*authority*," an authority which was all the more remarkable for its recognition in a society of trained teachers and interpreters. He spake as one sure of what He was and what He said. He adapted the current Messianic literature to a higher purpose, and revealed truths which it contained but of which men were not yet aware. And behind His words lies a power, an inspiration, which keeps them ever fresh and living, so that "they are spirit and they are life." For the Master did not regard His work of teaching as ended by death. There are many things yet to be said unto His disciples. "But they cannot bear them now; howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide them into all the truth." In these words He referred to the dispensation of

[1] "Inasmuch as the Messiah is the chosen instrument of God He is called the Elect, . . . or, like the Theocratic King in the Old Testament, the Son of God" (Schürer).

the Holy Spirit, under whose divine guidance the teaching of the Master shall receive progressive illumination and adaptation to the needs of men. That which was taught in proverbs is now discussed in plainness of speech. But the Teacher is the key to the teaching; He Himself is the centre and life of His doctrine and revelation. He proclaims Himself as standing in a unique relation both to God and man, as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Therefore, Christian doctrine cannot be divorced from the Christ. For Christianity without Christ is the body of faith without the spirit, the shell without the kernel of His religion. The revelation of the Father has its only guarantee in the divine personality of the Son. The work of the Teacher is only rendered immortal and quickening by the passion and resurrection of the Saviour. In his account of the development of the Christian faith the French Abbé Loisy regards the divinity of our Lord and the doctrine of the Incarnation as "a great effort of faith and intelligence." [1] He would find a substitute for Christ in the Roman system. And thus, while charging Harnack with making Christianity "a spirit without a body," [2] he would make it a body without the spirit. But the position of one who could write "Christ Himself lived on earth in the conscience of His humanity," and "His divinity is a doctrine which has grown in the Christian conscience, but which has never been expressly formulated in the gospel," and who could base his argument for "the infallibility of the Church" [3] on the words, "But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name,

[1] *L'Evangile et l'Eglise*, p. 181. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 128–130.
[3] *Le Qu. Evang.*, p. 756.

He will teach you all things and bring all things I have said to your remembrance" (John xiv. 26), which occur in a Gospel he declares to be in no sense history but to be "the experiences of three-quarters of a century of the gospel" is, after all, consistent in its inconsistency.

Every attempt of this nature to eliminate the divinity of Christ from the gospel issues in confusion of thought, just as every effort to get rid of the supernatural but results in its getting firmer grip of the minds of men. The very foundation of Christianity is Jesus Christ as the actual revelation of Deity to man, a supernatural fact for which every natural proof is imperfect and inadequate. To the Apostle St. John, He was the pre-existent Word of God, and to the Apostle St. Paul He was "the Power of God and the Wisdom of God." He was more than a Messiah of the Jews, if He is the Saviour of all men; He was more than a divinely gifted and inspired Teacher, if He is the Revealer of the Father.

And therefore it was, that that Epistle to the Hebrews which lingers most upon His mysterious *Kenosis*, and His earthly suffering and discipline, in the passages, "For though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered," "It became Him . . . to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings"—described His glory in a hymn-like utterance that fully expresses His pre-existent divinity, "Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds, who being the off-ray of His glory and the image of His person, and bearing all things by the word of His power, having through Himself made propitiation for our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, having

become so much better than the angels, inasmuch as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they."

The answer, therefore, to the question, "What is Christianity?" depends upon the answer to another question, "What think ye of Christ?" Was He a mere man like ourselves? Or was He a supernatural Person, a miraculous Being?

If He were but an ordinary son of man, He had long ago had His day, His system would have become stereotyped and sterile like the Islam of the desert, which owes all the life it has to the Christian elements it has borrowed, and to that mysticism which is fostered by every religion, and especially in the East. It might have developed into the present Roman system, had it the support of the ancient Roman empire. But could it present a spiritual kindgom, a Church living and quickened by the Spirit of holiness and love, conscious of a spiritual mission to reform and regenerate the world, in which the sacramental system is not an automatic function, but a living channel of grace to the spirits of the faithful, and in which the Real Presence of her Lord is at once a pledge of her life, as His body, and a proof of His life, as the Head?

No synthesis of Christianity, however plausible, which neglects this witness of the faith, can be true. For a Church, like the Church of England, which represents, in her spiritual nature and in her supernatural system, the divine life of her Master, could not be founded save upon a life indestructible and eternal and that passeth not away. She is herself a proof, an objective proof, that the Master is still with His people. And her history from the Council of Arles, 314 A.D., to the present day registers seventeen centuries of cruel change, woeful vicissitude but

abundant blessing. Emerging exalted and purified from her trials, with the scars of antiquity upon her brow, and preparing to undertake her glorious mission with a larger heart and hand, she is a proof that the Master has been with her all the days, ancient and modern. With Him present the future is her own.

Furthermore, the documents in which that sublime Personality is presented to us have not created faith in Him. They owe their existence to faith in His divinity. The writers of the Gospels and Epistles were men convinced that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the unapproachable and peerless Son of Man. Many of them were eye-witnesses of His glory and ministers of His word. And it was because they believed in Him that they wrote of Him. Faith in Christ begat the gospel of Christ. And we do not believe that the Christ of history was "the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," because we believe in the authenticity and genuineness of the Gospels; but we believe that the Gospels are true records, because we have first believed in the Real Presence of Christ.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST

THAT it was no temporary relation that our Lord was forming with His disciples, but that the connection between the Christ and His Church was to be perpetual, we are assured by His own words, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

This glorious promise and pledge of the presence of Jesus was to encourage and inspire the disciples from whom He was departing, and upon whose lives and labours He intended to build His Church. The Greek original is more expressive, more tender than the English translation. "Lo, I am with you all the days until the accomplishment of the æon." The word æon signifies age, and in the gospel it means the period of time that was inaugurated by the Incarnation, and is to be consummated by the Second Advent. Then will be concluded this present æon, to be followed by another and more glorious æon or age, when the Christ shall dwell with men, and they shall be His people. But in the meantime, until that happy æon of exalted life and enhanced felicity shall come, the Saviour has promised to be with His people. During this age of expectation we are buoyed up by faith in the ever-present Christ, trust in the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, and hope in the coming

of the Messianic Kingdom. How often are our spirits cast down! How often do we need a friend in our journey through life! When dark days come upon us, misfortune and evil bring trouble and trial upon our souls. Thick and fast the harvest of sorrows ripens or ever the sickle of the Saviour may cut it down. At such times how we long for a friend to comfort and cheer us! These words may reach those who have never yet felt a wound. May they never feel it; but it is not at all probable that they will escape. It would not be good for them to escape. If we want to have fellow-feeling—the most potent of all feelings—we shall not shrink when the ordeal of sorrow comes upon us; but we shall face it, and go through it like men. And we shall endure it all the more readily and staunchly from knowing that in Emmanuel we have One with us, strong to uplift and support us in all our trials and adversities. And He has promised to be with us "all the days."

There sometimes lies a vast significance in the very words the Master used. The expression "all the days" fixes our thoughts upon the manifold dangers and chances of this mortal life in a way in which the word "always" could not. Through "all the days," be they gilded with the sunshine or dark and heavy with storm and cloud, the Master is with us to guide and console. No matter how dull the day, the presence of Christ will brighten it; no matter how gloomy and overcast the sky, the presence of Christ will cause the sun to shine upon us, and give our hearts cheerfulness and joy; no matter how distressed and sorrowful our life may be, the presence of our faithful Friend will help us to bear the loss of other friends, the ruin of our fortunes, the troubles and trials of time.

His glorious presence assures us that there is something that will never pass away from us—even the good part we have chosen ; reminds us that there is one thing that cannot be conferred by any earthly monarch —the favour of God ; one thing that cannot be bought or procured by man—the influence of Christ ; one thing that endures amid the quickly passing scenes of life—the love of the Father and the Son. It is the consciousness of His presence that gives us courage to face all the dangers, and bear all the burdens of our chequered existence. "All the days," days bright and happy, days dark and gloomy, He will be with us, entering into our joys and consecrating them, feeling with our sorrows, and making them lighter and easier to bear.

This union of Christ with His people helps us to bear the sorrows and joys of life ; it also helps us to face the problems and answer the questions of life. What more difficult question to answer is there than that constantly put to us by the Rationalists and Secularists of our time, "Is Christianity supernatural and miraculous ? and if it is, prove it." And yet the Presence of Christ enables us to answer it. That Presence is supernatural, transcending nature, and is challenged, accordingly, by those who deny the supernatural. But our best answer to those who deny the supernatural element in our religion is to show that we have it in our souls, that it has uplifted our lives with an influence and force that do not belong to the natural order of things, and that it has made us a power in the world that no natural cause can explain. In this way Christians are the truest evidences of Christianity as a supernatural religion. We who believe in the presence of Christ believe in the

supernatural, by which we mean not something that astonishes us by its ghost-like appearances, but something that attracts us and draws us upward to a higher plane of life by its spiritual power. And the best way to convince those who doubt the supernatural is to be filled with the power of the ever-present Christ and the Holy Spirit, and to live in constant communion with our God.

The other question, "Is Christianity miraculous?" is a part of the first. For the supernatural always appears miraculous and the miraculous always seems supernatural. But there is this difference, that the supernatural is generally regarded as something connected with the spirit-life, while the miraculous is considered to be something that contradicts or suspends the natural order. But who can say where the line between the natural and the spiritual is to be drawn? Who can tell where the natural ends and the supernatural begins? What may seem to us to be supernatural may appear to the angels as part of the natural order. And when all things are made clear to us, when we know all the causes and the reasons and the laws of the universe, then it is most probable that Christianity will appear neither supernatural nor miraculous, but the natural and logical course of God's love and law, and that the Christ will appear in His true glory and position as the natural and logical Representative of God to man and of man to God.

Accordingly, in our conception of Christianity, Christ is more than a preacher of Christianity or a prophet of righteousness. He occupies a different place in our religion from that held by Plato or Aristotle, or Kant or Hegel, in their systems of philosophy; a different

position in His Church from that held by Mahomet or Buddha in the communities they founded. For He is both the object and subject of Christianity, both the centre of its gospel and the gospel itself, both the foundation and the inspiration of His Church, both the Alpha and the Omega of its revelation. With Him it commences and with Him it finds its consummation. And therefore He is not only the centre but the nucleus of the Christian's life, which is hid with Christ in God, and of the Christian whose personality is merged in that of the Christ, so that it is "no longer I, but Christ in me," that believes and hopes and works.

Faith, in the last resort, thus depends upon the subjective proof. Christ comes before Christology. A man can only confess what He believes, and he can only believe what he has felt and experienced in his heart of hearts. Such a creed is real and sincere, and is an inspiration to practice. Every other creed is barren until the conscience has been quickened to understand and grasp its tenets. And this subjective proof of the divinity of Christ, this evidence of His supernatural personality which follows the sense of a new life, the consciousness of the spiritual thrill that uplifts and exalts our souls in our communion with Him, is independent of the Gospel records and the testimony of others. It is a purely personal matter between the Christian and the Christ. Of such a communion our souls alone are witnesses. No third party can be cognisant of what has passed between us, or of the rapture and delight which the Real Presence of Jesus gives to the heart of His loving disciple. What this "age" requires is more of God in its philosophy. What we Christians need is more of

Christ in our lives ; more of that sweet influence that pervades and purifies like the breeze from the ocean ; more of the aroma of sanctity and the air of peace which the Saviour breathed upon His disciples ; more of that quiet trust and confidence in His presence in our midst. If we believe more in the Real Presence of Jesus, more in His holy communion and fellowship divine, more in His sympathy with our earthly sorrows and our human troubles, more in His great atonement and intercession for sinners, and more in His intense interest in our daily toils and duties, however dull and wearisome they be, we shall be delivered more fully and completely from the sins and sorrows of this "æon," we shall be worthier witnesses of the miraculous Jesus, we shall be more trustworthy evidences of the supernatural Christ ; more genuine documents of the faith that lives and shall live more and more increasingly and abundantly until the new and holy state—the Jerusalem from above—shall be prepared for men, wherein they may receive a fuller manifestation of the glory, a higher realisation of the image of Chirst, and a greater assurance of the presence of the Lord among His people.

APPENDIX

THE PRESENT CONTROVERSY

In his recent work, *Christologies, Ancient and Modern*, Canon Sanday contrasts two types of Christianity, the "fuller" and the "reduced." The latter he says, has this immense advantage, that it is "strictly scientific." It is the predominant continental and modernised, as contrasted with the English and traditional type. He suggests Dr. Denney's phrase, "I believe in God through Jesus Christ His only Son and Lord and Saviour," as a possible meeting-ground between the two Christologies; and the Ritschlian watchword, "God in Christ" as "the irreducible minimum" of what Christianity means for us. In the doctrines of divine immanence and the divinity of man, we have analogies which may help to explain certain difficulties of the Incarnation. But Canon Sanday follows Sir Oliver Lodge, who seeks the solution of the problem in the sub-conscious world. The Christological question being essentially a question of personality, the relation of the sub-conscious to the conscious ego, of the subliminal to the supraliminal self, may indeed serve as an analogy to elucidate the commingling of the divine and the human in Christ. Professor Weinel (*Jesus or Christ?* p. 39) also regards the unconscious sphere as the key of all problems concerning the personality of Christ. "Its seal"

(the life in God), he says, "is in the indefinable and subtle realm of personality, in the unconscious regions of the soul." Canon Sanday, when describing the subliminal consciousness as the *seat* of all divine indwelling in man says, "The same or the corresponding subliminal consciousness is the proper seat or *locus* of the deity of the incarnate Christ" (*op. cit.*, p. 159). But this statement of the case is open to the objection that it represents the Deity of Christ as merely an intensified degree of a similar divine indwelling in man —the position of Sir O. Lodge, to whom that Deity is an intensification of the divine immanence in man. And it appears more accurate to speak of the divine consciousness as "the background—quiescent but still there and ready to be called forth whenever needed—of His thoughts" (*supra*, p. 101), than to say with the Canon that "the consciousness of our Lord is a genuinely human consciousness" (p. 174).

The practical suppression of this divine consciousness, whether made once for all before the Incarnation, or made continually during His incarnate life, is a mystery that may be explained by what takes place after the passage, like death, from one environment to another, where the spirit will manifestly not need and therefore not exert many of its present mental activities, but where it must put forth others. The deliberate *Kenosis*, or self-emptying of His divine powers and attributes, may thus have been the *conditio sine qua non* of the Incarnation. The hostility shown to this dogma by the Humanitarian school is in its favour. It may be an "artificial theory" (Sir O. Lodge), a "metaphysical figment" (Gardner), "mythology" (Ritschl), "a process which conveys no intelligible meaning" (R. Roberts); but it seems to be the Pauline view of the manner in which the divine adapted itself to human conditions by a deliberate and conscious self-sacrifice and self-limitation. The life of Deity involves continual self-limitation and self-sacrifice on an infinite scale. Personality

in its phases of will, thought, and deed, in the case of man, and according to the greatness of his manhood, involves self-restraint as much as self-expression. And in the case of the perfect life such would be manifested in a perfect manner, as in the creation of the universe, the incarnation of the divine, the atonement of God and men. Regarded in this manner, this theory does not reduce the Godhead or the personal identity of Christ to a myth, while in its less extreme form it explains certain phenomena and limitations of His human life. It does not imply a dual consciousness in Christ, but regards the Logos as imposing conditions upon His human manifestations. The question is not whether self-emptying " (St. Paul), or " occultation " (Canon Sanday), or " abandonment " or " surrender " (Bishop Gore), be the most correct expression, but which of them expresses most fully the self-sacrifice and self-limitation of the Incarnate Word. The humiliation of Himself was His assumption of " our body of humiliation," subject to suffering and the temporary cessation, through his voluntary self-sacrifice, of the working of His power of subduing all things unto Himself (Phil. iii. 21). The more complete His humiliation, the more divine His self-sacrifice.

The apocalyptic view of Jesus put forward by Schweitzer in *From Reimarus to Wrede* may restore some elements of our Lord's teaching rejected by Rationalism, but its thorough-going reading of the eschatological principle into the teaching, attitude, and sacraments of our Lord is not only opposed by Rationalism in the person of Wellhausen, who says that the manner of Christ's life " had not such an eschatological cast as that of His disciples, who renounced the world in order to prepare themselves for His advent," but also by the Church, which is faithful to the Word become flesh. It is not a purely apocalyptic Jesus who says, " Come unto Me, all ye that are weary," " *I am* with you all the days, *I am* the Way, the Truth, and the Life, *I am* the good Shepherd,

I am the True Vine." The Church cannot regard with approval a view of our Lord, even if, as is alleged, it confirms the historical trustworthiness of the Gospel, which presents Him as a beaten, baffled hero, a moral Samson rather than a divine Saviour. Can this new German aspect be the view of the New Testament, which presents a Saviour whose kingdom is universal and eternal, who declares He has conquered, and that He redeems man from sin to the service of God by His indwelling Spirit?

In the Ritschlian system, the position of the Incarnate Word is even more precarious for all its alleged centrality. He is described as possessing the religious view of a God for mankind, as the perfect revelation of the Father, as exhibiting a "solidaric unity with God," as possessing a supremacy over the world, but who as pre-existent is hidden from our ken, and who as exalted is withdrawn from our communion, "for there can be no mention of communion with the exalted Christ," who may be conceived as present, but is not really present, and who is consequently not a Being to be prayed to, but aloof from us is reduced to His temporal existence and His life-work upon earth. This may be a fact *for* faith, but it is not a fact *of* faith. The more the power of the historical Christ is examined the more it recedes into supra-historical background. The consequence of Ritschlian blindness to the latter is that "to-day there is hardly a single member of that school who does not admit a revelation of a God of love outside the person of Jesus or who speaks of His Godhead." So Professor Schmiedel asserts in *Jesus or Christ?* (p. 77).

With regard to the sinlessness of Jesus, called in question by Mr. R. J. Campbell, who says, "To speak of Him as morally perfect is absurd; to call Him sinless is worse" (*Jesus or Christ?* p. 192). Professor Schmiedel, who bases his scientific life of Jesus on nine "pillar" texts, selected because they imply a self-limitation which could not have been invented, admits

that, "as far as Jesus is concerned, it is certain that all writers of the New Testament assumed His sinlessness," although he considers their attitude determined by their veneration. But Sir O. Lodge affirms that "the glory of that lofty Spirit shone through the fleshly covering and preserved it from the load of sin which follows from inadequate knowledge, imperfect insight, animal ancestry, and an alien will" (*ibid.*, p. 119).

The philosophy of our faith is centred in the self-revealing, self-imparting Logos who expressed the relation of God to humanity and creation in a human life as unifying thought and love, vitalizing spirit and energy. It was, however, the consciousness of His mission, His self-consciousness that He was the Saviour, a vicarious consciousness dominant in the Fourth Gospel, rather than the consciousness that in Him "dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily," that lies behind those self-assertive sayings of the Fourth Gospel; not that Christ's great discovery was not Himself, but Himself in His relation to the Father's work, life, and children. Whatever imperfection can be found in the manner of Christ is accordingly due to the fact that He was compelled to adapt Himself, His message, and His self-revelation, to the forms of thought employed by His age, which were all too meagre and puny for His purpose, as Mr. J. E. Carpenter admits in *The First Three Gospels* (p. 349). Had the world been forced to accept the disciple-made Christ of the rationalist in place of the self-assertive Personality in the Gospels, that divine effluence had long since passed away from the earth, just as the glorious form of one long dead, when the sunlight and air enter the newly opened tomb, falls away into a handful of dust and ashes. The choice for us is not, "Aut Deus aut homo non bonus," but between the Christ of German idealism and the Christ of the Christian Church.

The Christ-idea of Hegel and Strauss represented a philosophical explanation of that influence and Personality. But if our Christology is to be applicable to the

problems of present-day life and expressible in modern forms of thought, it must find its centre, not in the domain of philosophy, but in the sphere of the spirit. The Christ of to-day is not a metaphysical dogma, but a living, loving Personality; not the Christ of mediæval speculation, the logic of whose atonement overshadowed the incarnation of His love, but the strong Son of God who became the Son of Man in order to make the sons of men sons of God. It is not subtle distinctions between the humanity and the divinity of our Lord that lead to the "one far-off divine event," but the moral distinction between the types He blessed andt hose He did not bless, that serve to consummate the human character. It is not metaphysical differences between God and man that lighten our darkness, but the conception of a humanised God, a God immanent and incarnate in human life, that leads to the City of God.

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